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# HEGEL'S

## Philosophy of Spirit

A Critical Guide

Edited by  
Marina F. Bykova

## Hegel's *Philosophy of Spirit*

The essays in this volume address topics prominent in current debates about Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit, which originally appeared as the third part of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817, 1827, 1830). Together, a group of internationally recognized Hegel scholars presents a sophisticated, well-researched, and considered account of Hegel's text, approaching it from different perspectives, philosophical schools, and traditions. Each essay focuses on a specific issue relevant to Hegel scholarship, carefully and clearly setting out established views of the text and putting forward incisive new interpretations. The essays will enable readers to obtain a broad yet analytically nuanced understanding of Hegel's thought and in particular of the Philosophy of Spirit, a rich and important work that has relevance for contemporary debates in the philosophy of mind and action, philosophy of law and religion, ethics, aesthetics, and social and political philosophy.

MARINA F. BYKOVA is Professor of Philosophy at North Carolina State University. She is the author of *Hegel's Interpretation of Thinking* (1990) and *The Mystery of Logic and the Secret of Subjectivity* (1996). She is also editor of *The German Idealism Reader: Ideas, Responses and Legacy* (2019) and co-editor (with Kenneth R. Westphal) of *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook* (2019).

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*Philosophy of Spirit*  
A Critical Guide

EDITED BY

MARINA F. BYKOVA

*North Carolina State University*



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## Contributors

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## *Acknowledgments*

The idea of a volume on Hegel's mature Philosophy of Spirit came to my mind when I realized that despite an upward development in recent Anglophone scholarship on Hegel and the presence of highly sophisticated interpretations of a great number of Hegel's texts, there is an acutely felt lacuna of high-quality works on Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, especially on its third part – the Philosophy of Spirit. This realization prompted me to think about an edited volume on Hegel's text. I was lucky to share this idea with the philosophy project editor at Cambridge University Press, Hilary Gaskin, who encouraged me to propose such a volume for the Cambridge *Critical Guides* series. I am grateful to Hilary for guiding me through all the stages of the book proposal and production. This publication project would never have come to fruition without Hilary's continual encouragement, support, and valuable help throughout the process. Many thanks are due to Sophie Taylor, editorial assistant at Cambridge University Press, who helped with logistical questions. Along with the contributors to this volume, I also appreciate valuable suggestions and comments that we received from anonymous reviewers recruited by the publisher. These suggestions proved to be very helpful and led to important improvements which undoubtedly enhanced the overall quality of the book.

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I am truly grateful for the honor of working with the distinguished group of scholars whose essays constitute this volume. They have contributed their zest, intelligence, and knowledge to make this volume enlightening and engaging. Their commitment to Hegel scholarship is matched only by their generosity toward those who would study the German thinker and his works.

## Abbreviations

The following is a list of abbreviations used throughout the volume for all references, along with their English translations.

Hegel is cited according to volume and page numbers of the German critical editions: either *Gesammelte Werke* (GW) or *Werke* (MM). References to the works of Kant and Fichte are also keyed to the standard scholarly editions: Kant, *Akademieausgabe* (Ak), and Fichte, *Gesamtausgabe* (GA) or *Fichtes sämtliche Werke* (SW). Multivolume editions are cited by volume:page numbers; when needed, line numbers are also included (volume:page.line numbers). In addition, references to pages of English translations of Hegel's as well as Kant's and Fichte's works are provided. If translations have been modified, this is explicitly stated directly in a text or in a note.

### Hegel's Writings

Hegel's *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* and *Philosophy of Right* are cited by section (§) numbers. In case of these works, "R" indicates Remarks (*Anmerkungen*) and "Z" indicates Additions (*Zusätze*). Where Hegel's published remarks are cited, the section number is followed by the suffix "R," as in "§240R." Where student notes from Hegel's lectures are cited, the section number is followed by the suffix "Z," as in "§240Z." Where both a main section and a remark or a lecture note are cited, an ampersand is interposed, as in "§240 & R" or "§240 & Z."

<i>Briefe</i>	<i>Briefe von und an Hegel</i> , 4 vols., ed. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Meiner, 1969–81) (English translation: <i>Hegel: The Letters</i> , trans. C. Butler and C. Seiler [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984])
<i>Enc.</i>	<i>Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften</i> (1st ed., 1817; 2nd ed., 1827; 3rd ed., 1830), 3 vols.,

- GW 13, 19, 20; cited by §, as needed with the suffix “R” or “Z” (for explanation, see above)
- Enc. 1* *Hegel's Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. T. Geraets, W. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Cambridge, MA: Hackett, 1991)
- Enc. 1B&D* *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline. Part 1: Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. K. Brinkmann and D. O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- Enc. 2* *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970; 2nd ed., 2014)
- Enc. 2P* *Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 3 vols., ed. and trans. M. J. Petry (London: George Allen & Unwin; New York: Humanities Press, 1970)
- Enc. 3* *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976)
- Enc. 3I* *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. W. Wallace and A. V. Miller, with revisions and commentary by M. J. Inwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007)
- Enc. 3P* *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (Enc. 3, §§377–482)*, 3 vols., trans. and ed. M. J. Petry (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978)
- ETW* *Early Theological Writings*, trans. T. M. Knox (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1948; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977)
- GW* *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften in association with Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (Hamburg: Meiner, 1968–)
- JS I* *Jena Systementwürfe I (1803–1804)*, GW 6
- JS II* *Jena Systementwürfe II (1804–1805)*, GW 7
- JS III* *Jena Systementwürfe III (1805–1806)*, GW 8
- LFA* *Hegel's Aesthetics. Lectures on Fine Art*, 2 vols., trans. and ed. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975)
- LHP-B* *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: The Lectures of 1825–1826*, 3 vols., trans. and ed. R. F. Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- L&M* *The Jena System 1804–05: Logic and Metaphysics*, trans. and ed. J. W. Burbidge, G. di Giovanni, and

- H. S. Harris (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986)
- LPhA* *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art: The Hotho Transcript of the 1823 Berlin Lectures*, trans. Robert F. Brown, with an introduction by Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)
- LPhS* *Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit* 1827, trans. with and introduction by R. R. Williams (Oxford University Press, 2007)
- LPhWH* *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, vol. 1: *Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822–23*, trans. and ed. R. F. Brown and P. C. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011)
- LPR* *Hegel: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, 3 vols., ed. Peter C. Hodgson, trans. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson, and J. M. Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984–87)
- LProofs* *Lectures on the Proofs for the Existence of God*, trans. Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford University Press, 2007) (translation of *Vorlesungen über die Beweise vom Dasein Gottes*, ed. Walter Jaeschke, *GW* 18: *Vorlesungsmanuskripte II 1816–1831* [Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1995])
- MM* *Werke*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel, 20 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969–71)
- PhG* *System der Wissenschaft. Erster Theil, die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), *GW* 9
- PS* *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. T. Pinkard (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); cited by paragraph numbers
- RPh* *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. A. Wood, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) (translation of *Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse. Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), *GW* 14)
- SL* *The Science of Logic*, trans. George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)
- SLM* *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1969)

- V* *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, 16 vols. (Hamburg: Meiner, 1983–)
- VGeist* *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Geistes* Berlin 1827/1828. Nachgeschrieben von Johann Eduard Erdmann und Ferdinand Walter. In *Vorlesungen*, vol. 13, ed. F. Hespe and B. Tuschling (Hamburg: Meiner, 1994)
- VGesch* *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte (1822–1823)*. In *Vorlesungen*, vol. 12, ed. K. H. Ilting, K. Brehmer, and H. N. Seelmann (Hamburg: Meiner, 1996)
- VGPh1–4* *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. In *Vorlesungen*, vols. 6–9, ed. P. Garniron and W. Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1986–96)
- VPhG* *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, Vorlesungsmitschrift Heimann (Winter 1830–31), ed. K. Vieweg (München: Fink, 2005)
- VPR1–3* *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Rechts*. In *Gesammelte Werke*, vols. 26, 1–3, ed. D. Felgenhauer and K. Grotzsch (Hamburg: Meiner, 2013–15)
- Wissenschaft der Logik.* *Zweiter Band. Die subjective Logik oder Lehre vom Begriff (1816)*, GW 12
- Wissenschaft der Logik.* *Erster Teil. Die objective Logik. Erster Band. Die Lehre vom Seyn (1832)*, GW 21
- WL* *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Band. Die objective Logik (1812)*, GW 11

### Kant's Writings

- Ak* *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, 29 vols. Königlich Preußische (now Deutsche) Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: G. Reimer, now De Gruyter, 1902–)
- CJ* *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. P. Guyer, trans. P. Guyer and E. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) (English translation of *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790), *Ak* 5); cited by *Ak* paragraph numbers
- CPR* *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. P. Guyer and A. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) (English

- translation of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*: 1st ed., 1781 (A), *Ak* 4;  
2nd ed., 1787 (B), *Ak* 3); cited by A/B pagination
- CPrR *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. M. Gregor. In *Practical  
Philosophy*, 133–272 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,  
1997) (English translation of *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*  
(1788), *Ak* 5); cited by *Ak* page numbers
- VKK *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes* (1764). *Ak* 2, 259–71

### Fichte's Writings

- FNR *Foundations of Natural Right*, ed. Frederick Neuhouser, trans.  
Michael Baur (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- GA *J. G. Fichte – Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der  
Wissenschaften*, ed. R. Lauth and H. Jacob (Stuttgart-Bad  
Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1965– ); cited by part/volume:  
page number
- SE *The System of Ethics* (1798), trans. and ed. Daniel Breazeale and  
Günter Zöller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)
- SW *Fichtes sämtliche Werke*, ed. I. H. Fichte (Berlin: de Gruyter,  
1970); cited by volume:page number





# *Introduction*

## *Hegel's Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Spirit*

*Marina F. Bykova*

Hegel's system of philosophy is perhaps one of his most enduring legacies. Many of his contemporaries, including Fichte and Schelling, attempted to arrange philosophical disciplines into a complex whole, demonstrating their interconnection and organic unity. Yet Hegel was able to accomplish this task in the most comprehensive and consistent way. The work that depicts Hegel's entire mature system in its basic structure is the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*. This is Hegel's only published presentation of his fully developed system consisting of three main parts: Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit. Hegel began developing the contours of his comprehensive "system of philosophy" during his time in Nuremberg (1808–15) where he worked as the headmaster (principal) and philosophy teacher at a city *Gymnasium* (high school). Apparently, his teaching obligation motivated him to draft an outline of his philosophical system, composing it in the form of successively numbered sections (or paragraphs) (*Enc.* 1B&D viii). This (encyclopedic) form of presentation was not a novelty; it was rather customary at the time for German professors to write thematic encyclopedias to be used as didactic tools, and Hegel followed this tradition. He lectured on his entire philosophical system with the aid of the composed drafts of the *Encyclopaedia* twice – in 1811/12 and 1812/13 – while in Nuremberg (cf. *GW* 13:620ff.) and again – in 1816 – in his first semester as professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg.<sup>1</sup> However, the printed (book) version of the *Encyclopaedia* appeared only in the summer of 1817. In its first edition, the *Encyclopaedia* contained 477 paragraphs and was composed as a complete course outline to serve as a basic text for students attending Hegel's lectures.

<sup>1</sup> During his following three semesters at Heidelberg, Hegel repeated the *Encyclopaedia* course twice, but in his later teaching, he relied on the printed version of the work.

Almost immediately after the book came out, Hegel began emending the text, adding supplementary remarks and extensive notes. These revisions served as a basis for the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, which Hegel published in 1827 while holding a prestigious chair in philosophy at the University of Berlin (1818–31). The second edition was significantly expanded: it included a hundred new sections and a substantially revised general Introduction, important supplementary material to Logic, and some added elaborations on the Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Three years later, in 1830, when Hegel issued the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, he introduced a few additional revisions, largely to further clarify the main principles and ideas of his philosophical system. He also elaborated in greater detail on a number of topics, including those relevant to his philosophy of spirit.<sup>3</sup>

Because of these numerous emendations, the text of the 1830 *Encyclopaedia* became very dense and difficult to navigate.<sup>4</sup> In order to “unpack” the very compressed material and explicate some of Hegel’s key points, the editors of the first posthumous edition of the master’s work, published in 1832, introduced supplemental notes (the so-called *Zusätze*, or Additions) which were drawn partially from Hegel’s own lecture manuscripts, but mostly from notes taken by students attending his lectures. Although it would be a mistake to regard the Additions as authentic text by Hegel or even a verbatim record of his lectures, they certainly can be considered reliable documents representative of his views. By using largely non-technical language, the Additions are very helpful elucidations of the ideas stated in the main text: they explain and illustrate what would be otherwise a highly dense train of thought formulated in abstract terms. In many cases, however, these explanations are double or triple the length of the main section itself. Combined with Hegel’s own published section remarks, these Additions made the *Encyclopaedia* an enormous book. Responding to this inconvenience, the editors of the first posthumous edition of the work decided to bind each part of the *Encyclopaedia* separately. This practice proved beneficial: in all successive editions of the *Encyclopaedia*, including its contemporary English translations, each of the three parts of the work – Logic, Philosophy of Nature, and Philosophy of Spirit – are published as separate volumes (cf. *Enc.* 1B&D; *Enc.* 2P; *Enc.* 3I).

<sup>2</sup> For a concise summary of the changes made to the second edition, see Kainz 1996, 39–40.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed list of the changes between the second and the third edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, see *GW* 20:578–97.

<sup>4</sup> Whereas the third edition contains the same 577 sections as the previous second edition of the work, Hegel added new remarks to some of the sections and, in a few cases, greatly expanded existing ones.

In the present collection of essays on the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit, contributors rely on this common practice as well.

This does not mean, however, that our volume studies the Philosophy of Spirit in isolation from its systematic context. On the contrary, one main goal of this collection is to counteract the widespread failure to appreciate the unity of Hegel's work and to surmount the tendency to compartmentalize his philosophy. The unity of the philosophical system as a whole and the interconnection of all its parts were indeed key principles, for which Hegel so rigorously advocated. The logically consistent internal structure of the philosophy methodically executed in the *Encyclopaedia* earned Hegel his reputation as one of the greatest systematic thinkers of all time.

Focusing on the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit, this volume provides a systematic reading emphasizing the role of Philosophy of Spirit within Hegel's mature philosophical system and its importance for understanding the complexity of his project. Such interpretation provides significant scholarly opportunities to scrutinize conceptually rich sections of this part of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* while also highlighting its connections with other integral elements of the work and important components of Hegel's whole philosophical system. This approach is especially important due to the unique material provided in the *Encyclopaedia*. It remains our main source for certain parts of Hegel's system not presented in any of his other works with some topics being treated there in such a comprehensive and systematic manner that far surpasses any other text by Hegel.

The *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit specifies Hegel's concept of spirit in greatest detail, as it is realized in the final stage of its self-development: a systematic presentation of a complex process of how it becomes a free, actual spirit. Thus, the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit is an indispensable source of ideas, and elucidates many features of Hegel's philosophical project.

The mature Philosophy of Spirit<sup>5</sup> offers systematic answers to important questions Hegel addresses. For example, without a clear grasp of Hegel's understanding of "subjective spirit," its relation to what Kant called "practical philosophy" (subsumed by Hegel under "objective spirit"), and its relation to our status as natural beings, Hegel's answers to the most enduring questions of philosophy simply cannot be understood. The

<sup>5</sup> Hegel began exploring topics relevant to philosophy of spirit as early as in 1802 while teaching at Jena. Among his early writings on these themes are *The System of Ethical Life* (1802–3), *Essay on Natural Law* (1803), as well as the two series of his *Lectures on Philosophy of Spirit* offered at Jena in 1803–4 and 1805–6. Those works, which focused on issues later explored in the philosophy of objective spirit, are the earliest surviving versions of Hegel's social theory.

Philosophy of Spirit examines in detail some of the most important Hegelian concepts such as recognition; subjectivity and intersubjectivity; relations between causality and freedom, on the one hand, and human rights and freedom, on the other; moral normativity; the cultural role of art and religion; and other topics central to Hegel's philosophy and contemporary philosophical concerns. These examinations do not simply reiterate ideas Hegel formulates in his other published texts (e.g., the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Elements of Philosophy of Right*). The offered discussions convey new insights which either supplement or diverge from, perhaps improving on, those found in the thinker's more familiar publications. In the Philosophy of Spirit, we have the text that enables us to follow closely the twists and turns of Hegel's thought in relation to some of the central questions animating current Hegel scholarship, and many of the crucial considerations marking Hegel's relevance to contemporary philosophy, both analytic and continental.

Hegel organizes the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit according to his usual triadic pattern, dividing it into three large sections, each with a tripartite subdivision: philosophy of subjective spirit (subdivided into anthropology, phenomenology, psychology), philosophy of objective spirit (subdivided into right, state, ethical life), and philosophy of absolute spirit (subdivided into art, religion, philosophy). In 1820, he published *Elements of Philosophy of Right*, which expanded his philosophy of objective spirit. Hegel's philosophies of subjective and of absolute spirit were elaborated only in Hegel's various lecture series (on philosophies of subjective spirit, art, religion, and on the history of philosophy) in Berlin. While both the *Philosophy of Right* and some of the *Lectures* (particularly *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, relatively recently translated into English) have received extensive scholarly attention,<sup>6</sup> the text of the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit has been largely neglected until now.<sup>7</sup> Given the systematic and conceptual importance of the Philosophy of Spirit, the level of scholarly attention it has received is disappointing. In the English-speaking world, it has remained less known and less studied than Hegel's other published texts. The widespread view of this text as merely propaedeutic, which "compresses

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Neuhouser 2000; Hodgson 2005; Brooks 2007; Pippin 2008; 2014; Moggach 2011; Dorian 2012; Stern 2013; Houlgate 2016a; Westphal 2016–17a; 2016–17b; Brooks and Stein 2017; Pinkard 2017b.

<sup>7</sup> There is not much research, especially in English, devoted to the treatment of the Philosophy of Spirit within the *Encyclopaedia* system. Among publications that at least partially rectify the situation are Stillman 1987; Schnädelbach 2000; Hermann-Sinai and Ziglioli 2016.

the material almost to the point of unintelligibility" (*LPhS* 3), still persists. This attitude is not only mistaken, but it undermines the significance of this major part of the *Encyclopaedia* in realizing the central aim of Hegel's philosophy to constitute a genuine system. It also diminishes the philosophical value of the text, neglecting an array of topics and insights central to Hegelian thought not discussed in such detail in any of his other writings.

The present collection attempts to fill the existing gap in Hegel scholarship by bringing into focus the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit and demonstrating its systematic significance for Hegel's philosophical project, and the wealth of ideas and concepts it presents. The present volume reveals important reasons why such an encounter is warranted. It shows that only in the Philosophy of Spirit is the metaphysical perspective of pure thinking central to Hegel's *Logic* reconciled with the perspective of the thinking, knowing, and acting subject: both in the form of its individual life as subjective spirit and through the objectified forms of its social and cultural life, as objective and absolute spirit, respectively.

The *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit is a rich text in which Hegel treats a wide range of topics that, as readers will see, remain vital. Many are central to contemporary debates in the philosophy of mind, philosophy of action, social and political philosophy, philosophy of law, ethics, philosophy of religion, and aesthetics. Drawing on the riches of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit, our volume contributes to current discussions in these fields while assessing the consistency of Hegel's claims and delving into his insights. This research is promising because it lays the groundwork for what might well become a serious Hegelian alternative to more familiar models of cognition, moral and social agency, freedom, social ontology, and action theory.

The present volume makes no grand claims to provide a comprehensive examination of all the topics of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit. Rather, this collection offers concerted analyses of some central considerations and arguments in the text and its associated writings. The volume consists of twelve new essays, which address specific issues central to Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit that are also prominent in current debates about Hegel and in some relevant fields. As a collection of linked original essays, our *Critical Guide* presents and assesses the state of the art in understanding and evaluating Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit.

This volume does not intend to adopt any specific interpretive agenda or approach. Written by internationally recognized Hegel scholars, the essays included here offer a series of well-researched discussions that

together provide a reliable, thoughtful account of Hegel's views, approached from different perspectives, philosophical schools, and traditions. Along with established readings of the Philosophy of Spirit and its place in Hegel's philosophical system, new interpretations of the thinker's central ideas are also presented and examined in detail. Each essay – as well as the volume as a whole – provides a reliable examination of the topic it considers, highlighting a variety of approaches and ideas and addressing many concerns central to contemporary philosophers working in different traditions.

The volume is structured in four parts, each dealing with specific topics addressed in Hegel's book. Part I, "Philosophy of Spirit and Hegel's Philosophical System," re-examines questions about the conceptual unity of different facets of Hegel's philosophy. It shows that doing full justice to the systematic dimension of Hegel's philosophy requires more than focusing exclusively – as it is still common – on his *Logic*. Hegel's wider systematic framework also requires thorough consideration, most notably his analysis of "spiritual" relations, which illuminates how Hegel's *Logic* unfolds within the realms of nature and spirit, and conversely illuminates some of the most fundamental issues of the *Logic* itself. Part I also examines Hegel's concept of *Geist*, which is here given a non-traditional reading, departing from associations with and connotations of the term "mind," thus renewing our investigation and appreciation of specific historical sources of this concept so central to Hegel.

Part II, "Philosophy of Subjective Spirit," examines a series of specific topics that Hegel discusses in anthropology, phenomenology, and psychology within the *Encyclopaedia* and which are of interest to contemporary debates in relevant fields. Among these are Hegel's insights into human insanity (both the modest form of derangement (*Verrücktheit*) and the more radical form of madness proper [*Wahnsinn*]), and the relation between intuition and representation in Hegel's account of perceptual experience. Special attention is given to the analysis of Hegel's objectives in psychology as developed in his *Encyclopaedia* concept of "Theoretical Spirit." Based on rich historical materials, it is shown how Hegel's cognitive psychology attempts to capitalize on Kant's Critical account of cognitive judgment by grafting it onto Aristotle's account of our embodied rational agency. The essays in Part II, focusing on some of the most interesting of Hegel's ideas and arguments, identify promising new avenues for research within and beyond Hegel scholarship.

Part III, "Philosophy of Objective Spirit," examines a series of philosophical concerns central to Hegel's practical and political philosophy.

Many of these topics, such as freedom and equality, the rules of self-conscious human life, subject and subjectivity, moral agency, human sociality, and the state and constitution, are detailed in Hegel's *Elements of Philosophy of Right* and are usually discussed on that basis. However, that book itself is ultimately rooted in the section of the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit on objective spirit. To understand Hegel's aims in his *Philosophy of Right* thus requires comprehending it as a philosophy of objective spirit with its unique role within Hegel's philosophical system. Furthermore, while the *Philosophy of Right*, along with related lectures, presents a more developed version of the philosophy of objective spirit, many concepts have been detailed in the *Encyclopaedia* text in subtly different ways, especially in the later two editions, subsequent to the *Philosophy of Right*. The distinctive features of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* thus offer opportunities for new, more exacting interpretations and better insights into Hegel's ideas and arguments. Examining the extensive material of the *Encyclopaedia* philosophy of objective spirit, the essays in Part III offer fresh ideas and identify new questions and topics for further examination.

The final part, Part IV, "Philosophy of Absolute Spirit," explores crucial peculiarities of spiritual manifestations in the final stages of spirit's development and of Hegel's philosophical system as a whole. Reflecting on the systematic dimensions of Hegel's philosophy, this part tackles a crucial methodological question of the *Encyclopaedia* transition from objective spirit to absolute spirit, which, among other important revelations, unveils the complex meaning of the absoluteness that Hegel assigns to spirit at this final stage of its self-development. Special emphasis is given to less explored topics of Hegel's philosophies of art and of religion. Hegel's treatment of art in the *Encyclopaedia*'s section on Absolute Spirit in its final (1827/1830) form is only eight paragraphs long, but contains arguably the most systematic and mature account Hegel gave of art, in particular the relation between the philosophy of art and the philosophy of spirit. The chapter on the *Encyclopaedia* philosophy of art traces the historical development of Hegel's aesthetic ideas, highlighting specific relations illuminated in his text: the intricate relations between artist and the produced artwork, and between the artwork and its spectator. Another topical question discussed here is the relation of art to other modes of absolute spirit, i.e., religion and philosophy. The discussion of Hegel's philosophy of religion, while based on ideas stated in the relevant paragraphs of the *Encyclopaedia*, greatly benefits from more detailed treatment of these ideas in the *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, most notably, the volume on the Determinate



Religion, which is probably the least read portion of Hegel's corpus. New in this material is Hegel's use of his concept of recognition, incorporated into his account of the Jewish doctrine of God, including both the ideas discussed in the *Phenomenology* section on Unhappy Consciousness and the dynamic of divine master and human slave. This permits Hegel to avoid the sheer negative theology of the sublime, and thus to bring it together with the Greek religion of beauty and humanity. This move also leads Hegel to incorporate his own philosophical trinitarianism of the concept, i.e., the true infinite, which is a higher totality into which both of these are sublated. Until now, this material has been neglected. Yet it clarifies Hegel's view of the relations of these religions as forms of development of absolute spirit—the consummate religion remains rooted in what it consummates.

Even in a special volume such as this, it is not possible to encompass every relevant topic or approach, and some regrettable omissions and gaps were unavoidable. This is testimony to the conceptual richness of Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit; his *Encyclopaedia* text is a true treasure trove of philosophical ideas and arguments still awaiting their due attention, appreciation, and use. My hope is that this *Critical Guide* will prompt further studies, bringing into focus topics and issues Hegel discusses in his Philosophy of Spirit and demonstrating their relevance today.

The present volume will be of interest to those who seek an accurate, current, clear understanding of the main aspects of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit and who want to avoid limited, one-sided approaches to Hegel's work mounted from any specific philosophical tradition. I hope readers will appreciate the clarity, analytical precision, and engaging writing style of the essays included in the collection, which still remains a rare treat in scholarly writings on Hegel. Presenting a mixture of valuable approaches, this volume provides a distinctive compendium of scholarship reflecting the quality and diversity of contemporary Hegel studies and offers a sophisticated account of Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit.

PART I

*Philosophy of Spirit and Hegel's  
Philosophical System*



# *The Logic of Hegel's Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Spirit*

*Paul Redding*

The role played by Hegel's *Logic* within those parts of his "*Realphilosophie*," philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit, is puzzling and controversial. In this essay, I argue against the idea that we should be able to understand his *Logic* as charting some entirely autonomous domain without any help from the areas of *Realphilosophie* that presuppose it. This mistake here I take to be a consequence of failing to heed Hegel's demand that we understand the system of his *Encyclopaedia* as *circular*, moreover as containing "circles within circles" such that the circular structure is iterated into its parts, into the parts of those parts, and so on.

The consequences of this disruption to any straightforwardly *linear* understanding of the system's structure is that different parts of the system can be taken as mutually illuminating. Here I focus on Hegel's attitude toward the relation between thought and language, and argue that the dependence of thought on language, and language on recognitive intersubjective social relations, is to some extent implicit in the project of the *Logic* itself. While the categorical relations of the *Logic* help us understand what Hegel has in mind with the analyses of the realms of nature and spirit, his analyses of "spiritual" relations nevertheless also help us understand key issues in the *Logic*.

## **I The Very Idea of a Philosophical System**

Hegel had experimented with constructing a philosophical "system" during his time at the University of Jena in the early 1800s. In need of a textbook for the courses he taught there, he had aimed to construct such a system in textual form, but all that resulted were different "system sketches" that are, for the most part, fragmentary, changing, and confusing.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless,

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the development of Hegel's idea of a system in these years, see, for example, Bondelli 2013; Sandkaulen 2017.

a few basic features can be discerned as emerging from these sketches that are indicative of the later system as set out in his *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (henceforth, *Encyclopaedia*), first published in 1817.

Hegel seems to have settled on the characteristic tripartite structure that would later characterize the versions of the *Encyclopaedia* – that of *logic*, *nature*, and *spirit* – late in 1803 (*L&M* xiv), the year of Schelling's departure from Jena. Prior to this, Hegel's idea of a system had been influenced to a greater degree by Schelling, and had contained a concluding *fourth* part, *religion*. By this Hegel meant something like Spinoza's pantheistic monism, combined with the *methodological* idea that such a totality, the Absolute, could *not* be captured in "philosophy" qua mode of "reflection." Thus this new tripartite structure, combined with Hegel's insistence on the pursuit of philosophical *science* (*Wissenschaft*) as a system, appears to reflect the relative elevation of philosophical thought over "religion," as capable of properly grasping the unity of "the absolute," as well as a softening of the earlier critique of "reflection." Henry Harris has described this change as embracing a "Kantian conception of a moral *opposition* between nature and spirit" (*L&M* xviii). Furthermore, since Fichte was the thinker regarded as representing the contemporary form of Kantianism, it is not surprising that this change had included the incorporation of various *Fichtean* elaborations of Kant's idealism. These included a role for Fichte's idea of intersubjective "recognition" (*Anerkennung*) as a necessary condition of self-consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

Hegel's later years at Jena were *also* marked by the idea of a project, realized as his *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807, that was meant to lead the reader *into* the system. The consequences of this for the future of the system itself are complex and controversial. This new distinctly *phenomenological* project seems to have emerged from the earlier "logical" projects starting the system. At Jena Hegel taught courses on logic and metaphysics, with both subjects conceived as branches of a "logic" more broadly considered. Here "metaphysics" involved a type of *ontological* construal of those categories unfolded in the (more narrowly conceived) logic. It was this objective or "metaphysical" logic that would become the framework of the system's "logic," with the more "critically" conceived logic morphing into a new project first described as a "Science of the Experience of Consciousness," and completed in an expanded form and finally published in 1807 as *The Phenomenology of Spirit*.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Bykova 2013a. This recognitive theme was pursued especially in Hegel's text "System of Ethical Life" from 1802–3.

With the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia* published in 1817, the original idea of the “system,” however, had become complicated by a number of changes. First, as in the *Science of Logic*, a type of “reflective” logic – logic understood in a subjective *Kantian* sense – was now included in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* as the first part, “the Subjective Concept” of section three, the “Doctrine of the Concept.” Next, an abbreviated version of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, with a shortened scope that matched its original conception qua “Science of Experience of Consciousness,” was incorporated as the second part of the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit,<sup>3</sup> the first part of the *Philosophy of Spirit*. Finally, the terminological change from “System” to “*Encyclopaedia*” appeared to signal *explicitly* the intended *circular* structure of the *Encyclopaedia* itself. As Hegel puts it early in the *Logic*, “The whole (of philosophy) presents itself therefore as a circle of circles” (*Enc.* §15), and that

which in this first act appears as *immediate*, must make itself into the *result*, and (what is more) into its last result, in which it reaches its beginning again and returns into itself. In this way, philosophy shows itself as a circle that goes back into itself. (*Enc.* §17; cf. *WL*, *SL* 751/*GW* 12:252)

We will for the most part bypass the first two of these complex issues, but the “circularity” of Hegel’s method in the logic will be taken as a significant issue with which to grapple in an attempt to understand the role Hegel’s mature logic is meant to play in relation to his approach to the following two branches of “*Realphilosophie*,” especially his *Philosophy of Spirit*. However, it should be kept in mind that, as elsewhere in Hegel, *little* can be assumed as settled in any definitive way. Before directly addressing the role of Hegel’s logic in his Philosophy of Spirit, let us first acquire an initial grasp of the overall structure of the “encyclopaedic” system.

## 2 The Place of Spirit in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia*

After the Introduction (§§1–19), Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* comprises three parts (*Teilen*).<sup>4</sup> First is *The Science of Logic* (§§19–244), to all intents and purposes a condensed version of his earlier *Science of Logic*, published in

<sup>3</sup> On the changes to the scope of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that took place in its writing, see Förster 2012, chs. 13, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Hegel published three versions of the *Encyclopaedia*: first in 1817, and then in expanded editions in 1827 and 1830. Here I follow the 1830 version. Prior to this, however, Hegel had taught philosophy in the form of an encyclopaedic system at the Gymnasium in Nuremberg.

three books in 1812, 1813, and 1816.<sup>5</sup> The *Encyclopaedia Logic* proceeds in a way that effectively reproduces the structure of its earlier predecessor, with the *triplicity* of the system *itself* being iterated within its own parts, the parts of those parts, and so on. Thus it consists of three “divisions” (*Abteilungen*), corresponding to the three *books* of *Science of Logic*: the doctrines of “Being,” “Essence,” and “Concept,” with each division further subdivided according to this same tripartite pattern. We will return to the significance of this internal structure of the *Logic* as well as the dynamic principles according to which Hegel purports to generate these three-placed conceptual structures, but for the moment, let us follow the further development of the system into its two forms of real-philosophy, the philosophies of *nature* (§§245–376) and *spirit* (§§377–577).

That the distinctive tripartite structure found in the *Logic* runs through all these following parts of the system is obvious as soon as one consults the relevant paragraphs. Thus, after an introduction, *The Philosophy of Nature* comprises three divisions (*Abteilungen*) – Mechanics, Physics, and Organics – with the tripartite division being further applied within these divisions. For example, the third division is in turn made up of three sections on geology (The Terrestrial Organism), plants (Vegetable Nature), and animals (The Animal Organism), and in turn The Animal Organism divides into three parts: Formation, Assimilation, and Generic Process – the last effectively issuing in the transition from nature to spirit.

Regardless of exactly how we are meant to understand the transitions within and between such triads, it might be expected that there will be *some* sense here of continuity with difference, in the way that the generic process ending *Philosophy of Nature* leads into the first sub-sub-section, The Physical Soul, of the first sub-section, Anthropology, of the first section of *Philosophy of Spirit*, Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. Indeed, this is what we find. The introductory paragraphs of Anthropology are concerned with the corporeal *natural* soul (*Seele*), understood as in some ways different to but nevertheless continuous with – the rest of organic nature. With respect to the metaphysical question of the mind–body relation that is in play here, we must keep in mind that, rather than beginning with some dogmatically held assumptions, the categories and transitions of the *Logic* are meant to provide the orientation for any such understanding. In particular, as we will further see, for Hegel, it cannot be a matter of

<sup>5</sup> While sometimes known as the *Lesser Logic*, henceforth, I will refer to this as the “*Encyclopaedia Logic*.” Where the difference between the two *Logics* is insignificant, I will simply refer to Hegel’s “*Logic*.”

grounding the answers to such questions in some particular starting point – some initial intuitable “truth,” the certainty of which we can somehow subjectively assure ourselves, and from which we can proceed to construct the edifice of our account.<sup>6</sup> Rather, what the passage through the categorical sequences of the *Logic* is meant to have shown is that for any *particular* category in the system of categories, a *successor* category will be needed to fully make sense of the first.<sup>7</sup> Hegel will speak of the passage of a category to its successor as a “proof” (*Beweis*) in such a way that the successor category is “the truth” (*die Wahrheit*) of the antecedent. We will return to this “categorical successor principle.”

It is clear that this principle must have important consequences in the field of *Philosophy of Spirit*. For instance, Hegel will be critical of any type of *naturalistic* approach to spirit or mind that purports to explain the operations in this realm in terms of those provided by natural science or natural philosophy. However, the type of continuity between philosophies of nature and spirit will also set Hegel against any sort of abstractly *dualistic* ontological opposition of mind to body (Nuzzo 2013), as is found in various ways in early modern philosophy or, in a different way, in Kant. This emphasis on the corporeal nature of soul (*Seele*) reflects Hegel's high regard for Aristotle's approach to the mind, which he deems “fundamentally unsurpassed by everything that has followed” (*Enc.* §378). Hegel describes his own aim as to “unlock the sense [*aufzuschliessen den Sinn*]” of Aristotle's *De anima*.

In that work Aristotle had, much to the consternation of the early church, treated the soul as necessarily *enmattered* (Aristotle 1984, 1:641–43), but this did not imply any reductive naturalism. For example, Aristotle distinguishes the explanations offered by the physicist from those of the philosopher (dialectician): while the physicist explains a mental state such as anger physically (in terms of the blood coming to the boil), the philosopher explains such states in terms that would now be described as appealing to some “contentful” intention (the desire to repay hurt with hurt).<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Aristotle's thesis of the embodiment of the soul had coexisted with the claim that the contents of “nous,” the mind's most rational part, had to have an *eternal* existence, untainted by the finitude of their physical instantiations. To “unlock” the sense of Aristotle's analyses

<sup>6</sup> Thus, Hegel had rejected the role played by “intellectual intuition” in Schelling's philosophy.

<sup>7</sup> Should it be objected here that this surely cannot apply to the *final* category, the *circular* structure of the *Encyclopaedia* must be kept in mind. There is no “final” position of a circular process.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle's opposition to physical reductionism here has led to his being regarded as anticipating modern “functionalist” approaches to the mind. See Nussbaum and Putnam 1992.



Hegel will turn to the *logical* articulations of spirit, and I suggest that for this he would draw on logical notions that were essentially foreign to Aristotle, such as the idea of conceiving of at least some intentional states as having something like abstract “propositional” contents – contents with “eternal” truth-values. This idea was more linked to the ancient Stoics or, in modern times, to Leibniz or Kant, rather than to Aristotle.<sup>9</sup>

In short, Hegel’s appeal to Kantian dimensions of logic and mind fits his generally *critical* attitude toward those elements of classical approaches that, like Aristotle’s, failed to satisfactorily incorporate a “Kantian” opposition between subjectivity and nature. In the following sections we will trace some of the ways in which Hegel’s categorial successor principle is meant to help here.

### 3 The Categorial Fine Structure and Dynamics of Hegel’s *Logic*

In order to say something more specific about the “Successor Principle” and the way it is used to generate the triadic categorial cycles in the *Logic*, we will start with the triad of categories with which the Doctrine of Being commences – Being, Nothing, and Becoming.<sup>10</sup>

In attempting to establish categories that are normative for rational thought about the world, Being could seem to be the ideal starting place because of its immediacy and generality – *everything* that “is” surely falls within its scope. And yet this apparent advantage is also its shortcoming. Meant as comprehensive in this way, *nothing* will be left out of its range, but as we normally take a concept’s limits as helping to determine its meaning, with nothing *to* oppose it, Being seems frustratingly indeterminate.

Things are more complex than this, however, in that in a sense the *concept* <being><sup>11</sup> *does* seem to have a contrast, the *concept* <nothing>.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> I have pursued aspects of the role played by the Stoics for Hegel in Redding 2017. It might also be noted that the tripartite structure of philosophy into logic, ethics (spirit), and nature had been espoused by the Stoics. In contrast to the approach of Aristotle, the Stoics had thereby made logic a *part* of philosophy rather than a propaedeutic to it.

<sup>10</sup> I will use uppercase to indicate when these refer to the relevant categories.

<sup>11</sup> I will use angle brackets to indicate that the *concept* is here being discussed *as a concept*, and so in abstraction from any immediate instantiation. Here the commonly used quotation marks are not appropriate for Hegel because he distinguishes between a concept qua logical entity and the linguistic entity, the word, that expresses it. The quotation marks usage applies specifically to *linguistic items*.

<sup>12</sup> We must not forget that the categories – Hegel’s term for them is “*Denkbestimmungen*,” “thought-determinations” – are essentially concepts, but Hegel differentiates between the regarding of them as “concepts as being” and “concepts as concepts.” Both treatments of concepts will be integral to the *Logic*.

Of course one should not confuse a concept with what it is *about*, and in this sense the *concept* <nothing> is *not nothing*.<sup>13</sup> This problem for the determinacy of Being might be likened to Kant's worry about the extension of properties of finite objects to being *as a whole*. We naïvely think of the content of the concept <being> as supplied by simply *what is*, in the way that we think of the content of the concept <chair> as supplied by actual *chairs*. However, there is no particular intuitive content here to provide anything like an "extension" for that concept, as is found with empirical concepts.<sup>14</sup> In Hegel's version of the problem, forgoing the idea of "intuition," the content of a concept applied to some finite object might be thought of as made determinate by a limit supplied by an object that instantiates some incompatible concept: it makes sense to talk of *red* things because there are things that are *not* red, but blue, green, or some other *non-red* color. However, this cannot apply to the apparent conceptual contrast between <being> and <nothing>, as there is nothing to instantiate the latter concept, and with no specifying difference available, the concepts seem to collapse into each other – "this mere Being . . . is just Nothing" (*Enc.* §87).<sup>15</sup>

This intolerable situation of our inability to keep apart such obviously *opposed* concepts will be solved in the postulation of a further concept, <becoming>, which Hegel calls "the first concrete thought and hence the first concept" (*Enc.* §88Z). "Becoming" appears to solve the problem because it apparently *contains* both earlier concepts: for something to become just means for it to move *from* nothing *to* being. However, this way of thinking from the angle of the concept's internal makeup, effectively its "intensional content,"<sup>16</sup> now collides with another, as when one invokes the principle "From nothing, nothing comes" (*Enc.* §88).

The concept <becoming> was introduced at the intensional level, in order to resolve the problem with the relation of the concepts <being> and

<sup>13</sup> As an analogy, we might consider how in mathematics the null set is *not* nothing.

<sup>14</sup> One might think here of trying to convey to another what "existence" or "being" is by waving one's arm around as if to indicate *everything*.

<sup>15</sup> This is commonly taken as related to Spinoza's principle that "all determination is negation," a principle that Hegel has simply and unreflectively *assumed*. But this cannot be correct, as the very analysis here seems to undermine this principle.

<sup>16</sup> The idea of opposed "intension" and "extension" had been introduced by the Port Royal logicians and used by Leibniz and Kant. We might think of "intensional" relations as those articulated in Leibniz's "container" conception of concept. The fit for Hegel is not perfect but broadly captures his distinction between approaching concepts qua being and qua concept. Hegel is keen to separate out thought that aims at *being* (what exists), and thought that reflects on a *concept* (<being>), a concept that we try to press into the service of thought *about* what exists. For a good account of the fluidity of the intension–extension distinction around this time, see Anderson 2015.

<nothing>, but we *also* think of becoming *extensionally*, the becoming of actual things that come into existence. It is this dimension of its meaning that we seem to have in mind with principles like “From nothing, nothing comes.” When we consider the French Revolution, for example, we might come to believe that it developed from particular conditions – it did not emerge *from nothing* – and from this thought we might adopt as a general rule the principle “From nothing, nothing comes.” In short, the category Becoming also seems to face the type of “contradiction” that characterized Being – effectively a lack of fit between conceptual (“intensional”) and concrete (“extensional”) aspects of its meaning – and this contradiction will again need to be resolved by the postulation of a further concept.

We can start to see a pattern emerge, involving a type of cyclical movement through three concepts, <being>, <nothing>, and <becoming>. It is cyclical because with <becoming> we have arrived back at a concept with an apparent concrete content like that first ascribed to Being, but we have arrived there via a concept, <nothing>, that clearly purports to have *no* such content. We reached this entirely abstract concept via a type of “reflection” on the *meaning* of the concept <becoming>, treating it in terms of its conceptual parts.<sup>17</sup>

Arriving back at a purportedly concrete concept, another cycle will be initiated, in which the problem-resolving category will be *Dasein*, a “being with determinacy” that might be translated by the locution “Being-there.”<sup>18</sup> Predictably, Being-there will manifest problems that will be corrected by way of *its* successor category, Being-for-itself. It is worth spending a little time on this cyclical triad as it plays a central role in Hegel’s thought. Moreover, here we will also encounter features of these conceptual determinations important for understanding the nature–spirit relation.

The type of *qualitative* being captured by Being-there is immediate qualitative being as exemplified in some particular thing *there*, say, the *specific* color of *that* rose. <Being-there> is thus the concept of a quality immediately available to sensory apprehension. Later in discussing the equivalent *judgment*, the judgment of Being-there (*Urteil des Dasein*), Hegel will, oddly enough, describe its initial form (“the positive judgment”) as having a *singular* predicate. In the fuller discussion in *Science of*

<sup>17</sup> Leibniz is usually identified with the “container” conception of a concept in which the concept “contains” its conceptual parts.

<sup>18</sup> Here I follow Harris et al. in rendering “Dasein” as “Being-there” (*Enc.* 1). Hegel seems to be playing on the morphology of “Dasein” as “da” (there) “sein” (to be). The instantiation of a concept in this mode is always locatable, “there.” For a contrary view, see Bowman 2017, 221 n. 7.

*Logic*, he had treated the predicate as functioning as a type a *name*.<sup>19</sup> What the predicate “names” is the singular trope-like character of the quality qua “Being-there.” In the discussion of this category, Hegel captures this point with the idea that the *identity* of the quality so-conceived is tightly tied to the *way* in which it is immediately experienced.<sup>20</sup>

Now the initial “positive” judgment of Being-there cannot be a “true” judgment, as a judgment, according to the very concept of what a judgment *is*, has a universal predicate (*Enc.* §169). Thus the judgment of Being-there will evolve through a series of *negations* to become a judgment of reflection, with these two judgment forms instantiating different senses of the *predication relation*: in judgments of Being-there, the predicate “*inheres in*” the subject, while in the judgment of reflection, the predicate “*subsumes the subject*” (*WL, SL 555/GW 12:58*). It is this distinction between different types of predicate functioning that, in the first instance, distinguishes “qualitative judgments” from “reflective judgments” (*Enc.* §§172–73 and 174–76),<sup>21</sup> which correlates with the difference between the categorial determination of Being-there and that of its successor, “Being-for-itself.” It is clear that these transitions align with the well-known progression in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* from “sense-certainty” to “perception” to “the understanding,” but here the approach is more “categorial” (or, perhaps, “semantic”) than “epistemological.”

In Hegel’s later discussion of these two judgment forms the judgment of reflection will be considered to be “the truth of” the judgment of being-there, among other things because it has an eternal truth-value while the latter is contextual or “indexical.” According to the very concept of a judgment, a judgment is meant to be *true*, and so a judgment whose truth is contextually limited to contexts of its actual application will not be a *true* (i.e., genuine) judgment. We might therefore take the limits of “being-there” qualities to be shown by their contrasts to qualities taken to be “objective” or universally applicable: looking at *this* flower in the

<sup>19</sup> Hegel treats a judgment as *asserting* that “the subject is the predicate” – that is, *whatever is the subject, is the predicate*. This asserted *identity* now allows the conventional “the singular is universal” form to be also read as “the universal is the singular.” Both subject and predicate, Hegel tells us in *Science of Logic*, start as *names* (*WL, SL 557/GW 12:60*). The reversibility of subject and predicate terms means that either subject or predicate can retain this initial name-like quality while the other grammatical terms play the role of universal. This pattern of reversing subject and predicate terms effectively produces cycles oscillating between “inhering” and “subsuming” predicates. See Redding 2016, ch. 3.4.

<sup>20</sup> This gives the predicate here the modal quality of a “rigid designator” which, like a name, is meant to pick out the *same individual* in all “possible worlds.”

<sup>21</sup> These issues are much more clearly dealt with in *WL, SL 557–68/GW 12:59–70*, and *SL 568–75/GW 12:71–78*.

moonlight, it appears *now* to be black, but I know that it is actually red. It is only with the new category Being-for-itself, or what he describes as “quality completed,” that we can make the crucial distinction between *being so* and *appearing so*. If we think of Hegel’s category of Being-there as corresponding to so-called tropes or abstract particulars, then “Being-for-itself” might be equated with the category of “abstract universal.” Hegel’s account of the relation here is, of course, the reverse of those trope-using empiricists who conceive of abstract universals as simply *sets* of “exactly similar” tropes or abstract particulars. For Hegel, “being-there” qualities do not have the type of determinacy presupposed by notions like “exact similarity.” For him abstract universality will be the “truth” of abstract particularity. But there is a *sense* in which the analyses overlap, inasmuch as Being-for-itself “has to be interpreted generally as *ideality*” (*Enc.* §96).

All of these suggests that Being-for-itself coincides with the way predicates function in judgments conceived in a “de dicto” way, and this way of thinking leads to the thought of “property” or “quality” in terms of classes of those entities instantiating those properties or qualities, and *classes* are not themselves concrete entities but abstractions or idealities.<sup>22</sup> But Hegel *requires* concepts to have a moment of concrete presentation, and this will push him in the direction of language. The “being-for-itself” quality of red, qua *concept*, is not given sensuous presentation as a color, but it can be given sensuous presentation in another way, with tokens of the *word* “red.”

Remarks on the significance of “ideality” here reveal the depth of this issue, as it is central to Hegel’s claim that “every genuine philosophy is idealism” (*Enc.* §95R). But from it we *also* acquire a clue to a distinction between thought about nature and thought about spirit. Thus Hegel ascribes to the category of Being-there a role in thought *about* nature, but *denies* it an equivalent role in thought *about spirit*: “within the sphere of spirit . . . quality occurs only in a secondary way, and never so that it exhausts the content of any determinate shape of spirit” (*Enc.* §90Z).

Hegel gives as examples of such being-there qualities in nature “so-called simple matters [*einfachen Stoffe*], oxygen [*Sauerstoff*], nitrogen [*Stickstoff*], etc.” but I think we can dismiss his *actual* examples of simples, tied to his understanding of the science of his day, in order to grasp the broader

<sup>22</sup> In turn, Being-for-itself will transition into the first *quantitative* determination, “Pure Quantity,” which will commence a further cycle of transitions. Significantly, Being-for-itself will provide the appropriately reflective category from which the categories within the *Doctrine of Essence* will unfold.

point.<sup>23</sup> Hegel seems to be appealing to examples of simple property-instances that an empiricist might take to be ultimate in natural sciences such as chemistry. But this approach will not *standardly* apply in our understanding of *spirit*, as is shown by the fact that it can be applied in what we might consider *failed* instances of spirit.

Hegel gives the example of the deranged person “whose consciousness is completely pervaded by jealousy, fear, etc., that his consciousness is determined in the manner of quality” (*Enc.* §90Z). I take it that here he means something like a consciousness determined in just the way that we think of *natural phenomena* as determined – determined as entirely subject to *natural* laws, as when we explain, for example, the boiling of liquids. This is, of course, just the way that Aristotle’s physicist explains “spiritual” phenomena such as *anger*, by equating it with “the boiling of the blood.” The deranged person is presumably one for whom the normal “spiritual” forms of explanation, that is, explanations by the ascription to them of some kind of “intentional content,” are no longer adequate. Rather, the consciousness of a deranged person seems entirely determined by what humans have in common with other animals, factors the “spiritual side” of humans are meant to somehow overcome or go beyond. In such a process, the *subsuming* of hitherto “being-there” qualities *under* their concepts to become “being-for-itself” idealities, as well as subsuming *oneself* under *one’s own concept* – will be central.<sup>24</sup> These are processes we are meant to learn about in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, but they make sense only on the basis that there is something there to be “subsumed,” elements with the status of “Being-there” that originate from our animal nature. Spiritual nature will thus have as its *presupposition* animal nature, and must be *conceptually* understood *as* having this presupposition.

#### 4 Logical Structure and Process in Nature and Spirit

Progress through the divisions of the *Encyclopaedia*, as we have seen, works its way via a series of triplets, the members of which are usually broken

<sup>23</sup> We might here bypass the complications of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature*, bound as it was to his understanding of contemporary science. But it is significant that the German terms for oxygen and nitrogen convey the sense of sense of “abstract particular” that Hegel is trying to convey with “being there” qualities, literally “sour-stuff” and “stale-stuff,” respectively.

<sup>24</sup> It is not as if we *abandon* our naturally given characteristics in this process. Rather, as J. N. Findlay remarked, while mechanical explanations will not be applicable “to the *characteristic* performances of Life and Mind,” nevertheless they will have “*some* application at all levels of discourse, including the spiritual. There are, e.g., associative connections, phenomena of rote learning, cases of custom and social uniformity, which in every way admit of mechanistic explanation” (Findlay 1958, 245).

down into further triplets, and so on. From his conditional turn toward Kant around 1803, Hegel had maintained a balance between what he would take from Kant and what he would criticize in terms of the subjectivity of Kant's approach such as giving an inflated role to "reflection." Kant's "Table of Categories" in the *Critique of Pure Reason* had shown a pattern of triplicity, and while adapting this pattern Hegel would also criticize the fact that it was understood exclusively in a "reflective manner," as pertaining to thought *as thought* rather than as pertaining to what thought is about, *being*. Thus Hegel's categories would continue to be meant in an "objective" sense, and yet in section three, the Doctrine of the Concept, Hegel's *Logic* takes a sharp Kantian turn before reverting back to a final consideration of "objectivity." This is surely what we have now come to expect: starting from the concrete, there will be a type of "semantic ascent" to the reflective realm of the concept *as concept*, and then back again. But from this passage *through* the "subjective" logic, a new conception of "objectivity" should emerge.

Early in the *Encyclopaedia Logic* Hegel discusses "reflective thought" or "thinking over" that "has thoughts as such as its content and brings them to consciousness" (*Enc.* §2R), and this "reflective" approach characterizes the Subjective Logic, which focuses on "the concept as such" (*Der Begriff as solcher*) abstracted from its relation to Being.<sup>25</sup> It will thus deal with the "internal" conceptual determinations of the concept, "universal," "particular," and singular." There will, of course, be a *return* to "the concept as being," just as in particular triads the move to ideality must return to something concrete. But here just as there, the *new* concrete concept will not simply be the old.

The structures encountered in the second, *objective* part of the Subjective Logic, especially in relation to the idea of a "syllogism," will be of particular importance for understanding the application of the *Logic* to the philosophies of nature and spirit, because objects, both natural and social but especially social (families, states, and so forth) will be described *as* syllogisms. However, to grasp what Hegel could possibly mean by this *concrete* extension of a word that is standardly restricted to the formal treatment of inferential reasoning will presumably require an understanding of his reinterpretation of the Aristotelian approach to such reasoning. The formal syllogism is, after all, meant to provide the vehicle by which the concept becomes extended, and we get a sense of the importance of

<sup>25</sup> Or, as Hegel puts it in *Science of Logic*, with the "concept as concept" rather than, as with the Objective Logic, "concept as being" (*WL, SL 39/GW 21:46*).



understanding syllogistic structure and process from the way Hegel applies the notion at the very end of the *Encyclopaedia*. There, in its final three paragraphs (in the section “Philosophy,” which concludes Philosophy of Absolute Spirit), Hegel invokes the idea of *three* syllogisms to interpret the relation between the three parts of the system, each seeming to suggest a different system of dependencies.

The first appearance is formed by the syllogism which is based on the Logical system as starting-point, with Nature for the middle term which gathers together [*zusammenschließt*] the spirit with it . . .

In the second syllogism this appearance is so far superseded, that that syllogism is the standpoint of the spirit itself . . . It is the syllogism where spirit reflects on itself in the Idea: the science appears as a subjective cognition, of which liberty is the aim, and which is itself the way to produce it.

The third syllogism is the Idea of philosophy, which has self-knowing reason, the absolute-universal, for its middle term, which divides itself into spirit and nature, making the former its presupposition . . . and the latter its universal extreme. (*Enc.* §§575–77)

The syllogism is for Hegel the “truth” of the judgment (*WL, SL* 593/*GW* 12:95): that is, the category Judgment in the Subjective Logic will result in that of Syllogism. As we work through the generation of a series of different judgment types we witness a type of cycling between predicates understood as inhering and subsuming, with each of the three conceptual determinations (universality, particularity, and singularity) coming to fill “subject” and “predicate” places within judgments. In the *Science of Logic* Hegel is quite explicit: “subject” and “predicate” are not properly logical terms – they are *grammatical* terms, parts of the *sentences* (*Sätze*) that give expression to the abstract *contents* of judgment.<sup>26</sup> Distributing the three conceptual determinations over these two syntactic places will produce an array of judgment forms through which the cyclical dynamic works in this section.<sup>27</sup>

Progress through the judgment forms leads to its most developed form, the judgment of the concept, which expands into a syllogism (*Enc.* §§178–80), as when the application of a universal (U) (good) is shown

<sup>26</sup> For a modern reader it is confusing to translate, as is common, Hegel’s “Satz” as “proposition.” The modern “proposition” is much closer to the abstract content of judgment, at least the content of “subsuming” judgments, and when Hegel contrasts judgment, “*Urteil*,” with “*Satz*” (e.g., *Enc.* §167R), it is quite clear that he means by the latter the actual sentence.

<sup>27</sup> We should not be surprised at the assumption about the role of *language* here. In the Preface to the Second Edition of the *Science of Logic* Hegel expresses the reliance of concepts on their linguistic externalizations.



to apply to a singular (S) (*this* house) in a way mediated by a *particular* (P) (being built in such and such a way). From here, in the section “The Syllogism,” into which this transition leads, Hegel describes *three* types of syllogism that can be differentiated according to which of the three “terms” (U, P, S) plays the role of “middle term”: the Qualitative Syllogism (*Enc.* §§183–89), the Reflective Syllogism (*Enc.* §190), and the Syllogism of the Concept (*Enc.* §§191–94). In effect, this is simply a generalization of the process we have noted in relation to judgment, in which these three conceptual determinations can be distributed differently over *grammatically distinguished* subject and predicate places.

Without *some* familiarity with Aristotle’s syllogistic logic, Hegel’s analysis here is bound to look mysterious, but some basic points of orientation might be quickly sketched. For Aristotle, the “middle term” is the term held in common by the two premises that links these premises in a conclusion in which the middle term has been dropped.<sup>28</sup> Hegel works broadly within Aristotle’s “term-logical” framework, but introduces important differences. Importantly, he follows the earlier medieval transformations of Aristotle’s syllogistic by introducing a role for *singular terms* (such as proper names) that had no official place in Aristotle’s syllogistic. This is an innovation more in line with Leibniz’s *nominalist*-motivated radicalization of the syllogism, and it is what allows him to schematize Aristotle’s three “figures” according to the relative ordering of the determinations U, P, and S, which construes the syllogism as the final “truth” of the subjective concept with which the Subjective Logic started. These three syllogistic forms thus provide the pattern that allows the parts of the *Encyclopaedia* to be related in three different ways, as noted earlier.

Of course Hegel’s approach to “the syllogism” will not remain at the level of *formal* considerations as found in these early sections. A syllogism is not simply a pattern of symbols that can be arrayed in particular sequences as it was for Aristotle, and *neither* should we think of these symbolic structures as simply expressing something “subjective,” some inner psychological processes emphasized by the Moderns, or operative at a “transcendental level,” as with Kant. Rather, “syllogism” comes to designate holistically conceived dynamic processes making up both the natural world (as in the solar system, for example) and the *spiritual* world. Thus *triads* of syllogisms are applied in *Philosophy of Spirit* in the analysis of structures of objective spirit such as the state, for example, so that we can

<sup>28</sup> As the middle term “men” is dropped in the passage from “all men are mortal” and “all Athenians are men” to “All Athenians are mortal.”

understand the three spheres of modern ethical life, family, civil society, and the state itself, in terms of the three syllogisms.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, it is in the Subjective Logic that Hegel will derive the idea of such “concrete” syllogisms from a “formal” starting point, and we can expect to understand this resulting sense of objectivity only via this passage through “subjectivity,” that is, through Hegel’s account of “formal logic.”

What we learn from the cyclical progression of judgment forms through the Subjective Logic is that concepts, in order to have determinate content, need contributions from two directions: they need to be *instantiated* in substances, the logical structure of which becomes more complex as we work our way through the series, and they need systematic connections to *other concepts*. And we learn that these two functions are served by the two different ways in which the predicates of judgments function: “inhering” predicates are made determinate by the (being-there) qualities inhering in the substances indicated by the subject terms, and “subsuming” predicates relate (being-in-itself) properties indicated by predicates to properties of *other* substances via the patterns existing among those *classes* of substances of which the properties can be predicated. Judgments as *unities* of conceptual determinations need to be thought of in a similarly *bidirectional* way. Judgments of Being-there are instantiated by the way substances bear qualities: *some specific rose’s being red* (*Enc.* §167R) is the content of the judgment “The rose is red,” and similarly there must be *instantiations* of syllogisms. There must be worldly structures and processes that adequately instantiate those triadic structures and processes involving three conceptual determinations which we think of as *syllogisms*. The contents here are not primarily states of psychologically conceived subjects.

All of this raises a question, however: if concepts need a contribution from instantiations in order to be determinate, what can count as instantiations of the “reflectively considered” concepts – concepts considered purely *as* concepts? This is, I suggest, a generalization of the question posed earlier about the problem of the need for instantiations of the category Being-for-itself, which, as we know, is an “ideality.” The answer to this question, while implicit in the *Logic*, becomes explicit in the *Philosophy of Spirit*. The summarized answer here is that while the concept

<sup>29</sup> In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel first touches on this in relation to the state in the *Logic* which he describes as a “system of three syllogisms . . . It is only by the nature of this triple coupling, by this triad of syllogisms with the same termini, that a whole is thoroughly understood in its organization” (*Enc.* §198). The three syllogisms here coincide with the organization patterns of family, civil society, and state proper. On the way these different syllogistic structures provide different *points of view* onto the whole, see Redding 1996, ch. 9. For a synoptic view, see Vieweg 2017, 217.

of “rose” is instantiated in any particular rose, the concept “rose” considered *as* a concept, and so able to exist in logical relations with other concepts, must be instantiated in particular instances of *the word* “rose.” Likewise with “reflective” judgments and syllogisms: they too will be instantiated in relations among linguistic expressions. It is this type of “linguistic-dependency” that Hegel had expressed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* with the idea of language (*Sprache*) as the Being-there (*Dasein*) of spirit (*Geistes*) (*PhG*, *PS* 651/*GW* 9:351).<sup>30</sup>

## 5 The Mutual Illuminations of Logic and Philosophy of Spirit

I have attempted to bring out a feature of Hegel’s approach in his *Logic* that may seem to contradict the idea of the *Encyclopaedia*, with its sequence of *Logic*, *Philosophy of Nature*, and *Philosophy of Spirit*, as being the definitive presentation of his system. That is, to suggest the recognition-mediating role of speech as a necessary condition for thought seems to make the *Logic* dependent on something that is found “down-stream” in the *Encyclopaedia*. While in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel had suggested a type of linguistic-dependence of thought, it is sometimes assumed that by the time of the *Science of Logic* he had abandoned this thesis (e.g., Forster 2011, 148), or that at least in the developmental exposition of the *Encyclopaedia*, the *Logic* should assume no such doctrines. Indeed, later, in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Spirit*, Hegel goes on to address this issue of language as a prerequisite for thought in a way that links back to the discussion in the *Phenomenology*. In the section “Psychology,” for example, he touches on the role of the *sign* in thought, rejecting approaches to logic and psychology in which “signs and language are usually foisted in somewhere as an appendix, without any trouble being taken to display their necessity and systematic place in the economy of intelligence” (*Enc.* §458).<sup>31</sup> But how are we to address the objection that introducing themes such as this into the *Logic* breaks the procedure of “proof” working throughout the *Encyclopaedia*? I have stressed Hegel’s

<sup>30</sup> The most developed account of Hegel along these lines is that of Robert Brandom 2019, but for an account of the ways in which Hegel’s approach differs from Brandom’s, see Redding 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Thus these sections of the *Encyclopaedia* take up the theme familiar from the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where Hegel described the “force of speech” as the Being-there “of the pure self as the self” (*PhG*, *PS* 507/*GW* 9:276), that is, the Being-there of the abstractly reflective mind represented by Kant’s “transcendental subject” and Fichte’s “I = I.” “In language,” Hegel goes on, taking up the Fichtean theme of recognition, “the *singular individuality* of self-consciousness *existing for itself* comes into existence so that it is *for others*. Otherwise the I as this pure I is not *there*” (*PhG*, *PS* 507/*GW* 9:276).

imagery of the “circular” methodology of the *Encyclopaedia*, but if there is no *linear* exposition of these determinations, how can Hegel’s *actual* exposition of his system satisfy his requirements?

Here I believe we need to approach with care the implications of Hegel’s version of the linguistic-dependency thesis for his systematic thought. When we think of Hegel’s “system,” we almost inevitably think of what is set out in Hegel’s *books*, with their sequential ordering – Logic, Philosophy of Nature, Philosophy of Spirit – and the sequential organization of parts within these books. That is, we tend to think of the parts as ordered *in* space and time, which is, after all, the necessary medium in which the linguistic articulation of thought is set out. But if we think of Hegel’s “system” as an organization of something meant to be understood entirely at the *conceptual* level, then presumably we should *not* think of these organized parts as related in space and time. The subject matter is conceptual, the relations logical, *not* linguistic – and this issue would seem to distinguish Hegel’s approach to thought and language from the type of linguistic-dependency found in Herder and others. Hegel’s stress on the *cyclical* structure of the material suggests how the linguistic organization of Hegel’s texts does not simply mirror the conceptual organization of the material itself.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, it is equally the case that we cannot directly engage with this conceptual material in a way that bypasses its expression *in* language. Hegel’s way out of this dilemma, I suggest, is linked to what I have called his “categorical successor principle” by which later parts of the system will retrospectively illuminate what had been established in a more immediate fashion in the earlier. This, I suggest, reveals the peculiarity of Hegel’s approach to the relation of logic and metaphysics.

Hegel’s logic, it is commonly said, is, *unlike other* logics, really a metaphysics – a claim that carries the questionable assumption that *other logics* are somehow free of metaphysical commitments. It might be preferable to think that what distinguishes Hegel’s logic from others is *the type* of metaphysical doctrines which it somehow encodes. The actual *content* of that metaphysics will only be spelled out in those parts of his system that follow the *Logic* – his philosophy of nature and philosophy of spirit. Thus it is only there that we should expect to find details of the *natural* world, with natural kinds, the instances of which behave in lawlike ways, and so forth. Nevertheless, this world might be found to include within it a place for minds or “spirit” (*Geist*), and so we might expect to find there evidence

<sup>32</sup> Heikki Ikäheimo raises the problem of such a *linear* reading of Hegel’s presentation in the realm of subjective spirit in Ikäheimo 2017, 428–30, especially 429 n. 11.

for how *living entities* exhibit certain mind-like capacities of “for-self”ness. These capacities might extend to the capacity for the “recognition” (*Anerkennung*) of other similar creatures, as well as the capacity for linguistic communication.

One must of course avoid interpreting Hegel’s *Logic* in ways that *presuppose* such metaphysical results, but I contend that appeals to the aspects of Hegel’s account of judgments and syllogisms that have just been briefly surveyed will suggest a place for how *minds* have a place in the world that is being judged and reasoned about without leaving the field of logic itself. Thus while the peculiarities of Hegel’s logical doctrines will surely signal *something* about Hegel’s later treatment of these metaphysical issues, this “something” will be as yet restricted to an abstractly conceptual level awaiting further determination.

In *Science of Logic* Hegel had alluded to the categories as if “*an exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit*” (WL, SL 29/GW 21:34), but perhaps we should reflect on this in the light of Hegel’s actual conception of God: again, *time* is not the relevant medium here. There is no room in Hegel’s theology for an Old Testament Father who exists *prior* to creation. The conceptual structures and processes charted in his *Logic* are, from the conceptual point of view itself, dependent on the instantiation of *abstract* concepts, and these are to be found in those linguistic and other symbolic externalizations that are the products of human society. The “truth” of this was later made explicit in *Philosophy of Spirit*, but it is a truth that had been implicit within the *Logic* itself.<sup>33</sup>

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## *The Origin and Character of Hegel's Concept of Geist*

*Michael N. Forster*

The concept of *Geist* – mind or spirit – plays a central, indeed dominant, role in Hegel's philosophy. But the concept seems to me to be very different in both its origin and its character than it is commonly taken to be. So I would like here to try to shed some light on both of these aspects.

### I

Let us begin with the concept's character. Hegel's concept of *Geist*, or mind, strikes me as extremely unusual and radical. Why? Mainly in virtue of the following seven characteristics:

(1) Famously, Hegel identifies having a *Geist* as the *differentia* of human beings as contrasted with mere matter, plants, and animals. But he also distinguishes between three types of *Geist*: subjective *Geist* (i.e., the human individual), objective *Geist* (i.e., society) or the *Volksgeist* (i.e., more or less the same, but considered historically), and absolute *Geist* (i.e., God). In Hegel's conception, these three types of *Geist*, or mind, form a sort of hierarchy in which each of the lower ones necessarily belongs to the one above it, though there is also a necessary dependence in the other direction.

(2) Less famously, Hegel champions a quite distinctive general theory about the nature of *Geist*, or mind. He is certainly no dualist, as most thinkers of the Enlightenment, and in certain ways also Kant and Fichte, had been before him – and as some interpreters, such as Karl Marx, have mistakenly interpreted him.<sup>1</sup> Nor is his position even the somewhat more radical one that although the *Geist*, or mind, partly transcends the body

<sup>1</sup> Roughly speaking, Fichte started out from dualism, cut away the material object, leaving just the subjective mind, then tried to reconstitute the material object as a sort of derivative from the subjective mind. Marx then, following Bruno Bauer, interpreted Hegel as a sort of super-Fichte who retained the basic Fichtean picture, albeit while collectivizing the mind in question.

and its behavior, it includes these as an essential aspect of itself – a position that Charles Taylor sometimes seems to ascribe to him (especially in connection with absolute *Geist*).<sup>2</sup> No, Hegel's position is fundamentally (with only a few modest qualifications) the even more radical one that the *Geist*, or mind, and its conditions just *consist of bodily behavior*.<sup>3</sup> In other words, he champions a form of behaviorism *avant la lettre*. This is why in the section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) on "Physiognomy and Phrenology" he claims, in explicit rejection of both dualistic conceptions of the mental and what he considers *cruder* materialistic conceptions that identify the mind and its conditions with a specific part of the body (e.g., the face, the skull, or the brain) and its conditions:

The true being of a human being is rather his deed [*Tat*]; in this individuality is actual [*wirklich*], and it is this that sublates what is merely meant in its two sides [i.e., as something inexpressibly inner and as a motionless bodily being] . . . The deed . . . is murder, theft or charity, brave deed, etc., and it can be said of it what it is. The deed *is* this, and the individual human being *is* what *the deed is*. (*PhG*, MM 3:242–43; certain emphases have been omitted)<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (1830) Hegel denies that the *Geist*, or mind, is separable from the body or that it is a thing at all (*Enc.* §§378, 389). And he claims on the contrary that "The human being, as he is outwardly, i.e. in his actions (not, to be sure in his merely bodily outwardness [e.g., his face, skull, or even brain – M.N.F.]), so is he inwardly" (*ibid.*, §140); that

The determination of the mind [*Geist*] is . . . *manifestation*. The mind is not any sort of determination or content whose expression or outwardness

<sup>2</sup> See Taylor 1975. A few representative terms of Taylor's that reveal this interpretation: "expressivism," "vehicle," "embodiment," "englobe." (As we shall see later, this characterization would apply better to Herder than to Hegel.)

<sup>3</sup> The qualifications in question mainly concern the following: (a) the already-mentioned necessary embeddedness of each type of *Geist*, or mind, in the one above it, e.g., of subjective *Geist* (the human individual) in objective *Geist* (society); (b) certain distinctive features of Hegel's concept of identity, which entail that it cannot be a matter here of a simple identity between mind and bodily behavior, but rather of an "identity of identity and difference" (see, e.g., *Enc.* §50; *Enc.* §573; cf. Forster 1998, 199–204); (c) a sharp distinction – though also compatibility – between, on the one hand, mere causal explanation or explanation in terms of *constitution*, and, on the other hand, deeper teleological explanation (see, e.g., *Enc.* §389); and (d) the essential positing of a certain opposition between subject and object by the viewpoint of the *Geist*, or mind, itself (see *Enc.* §§ 381Z, 415).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *RPh* §§124, 343: "What the subject *is* is the *series of its actions* [*Handlungen*];" "The history of mind [*Geist*] is its *deed*, for it is only what it does." (All translations in this essay are my own; certain emphases have been omitted.)

would merely be a form distinct from it; so that it does not reveal *something*, but its determinacy and content is this revealing itself. Its possibility is therefore immediately . . . *actuality* . . . The self-revelation is . . . itself the content of the mind and not, for example, merely a form that might be added to the content externally; so that the mind does not in its revelation reveal a content distinct from its form, but its form, which expresses its whole content, is its own self-revelation. Form and content are thus identical with each other in the mind. However, people commonly conceive of the revealing as an empty form that would need to have a content added to it from outside, and they think of the content here as something existing in itself, something self-sustaining, and of the form as the external manner of relation of the content to something else. But in speculative Logic it is proved that in truth the content is not merely something existing in itself, but something that through itself sets itself into relation to something else, just as conversely in truth the form must be understood not merely as something transitory, something external to the content, but rather as what makes the content a content, something that exists in itself, something distinct from something else. The true content thus contains the form in itself, and the true form is its own content. But we need to recognize that the mind is this true content and is this true form. (*Enc.* §383)

(3) It is even less well known that Hegel holds that this constituting of the mind or of mental conditions through the individual's behavior always (with one exception, to be mentioned in a moment) remains radically revisable, that even a putatively "already" constituted mind or mental condition can always be modified later through further behavior. This is not merely a matter of a sober, easily understood, endless revisability of *judgments* about past minds and mental conditions, or of minds and mental conditions themselves *for the future*,<sup>5</sup> but of a much more radical, paradoxical revisability of "past" minds and mental conditions themselves as such. Or, if that sounds too paradoxical even to be taken seriously, perhaps it could be reformulated in a less outrageous way: judgments about minds and mental conditions have only *assertibility*-conditions, consisting entirely of bodily behavior, but no *truth*-conditions. Accordingly, Hegel writes in the section of the *Phenomenology* on "Physiognomy and Phrenology":

The being of the mind cannot be understood as something simply unshaken and unshakeable [*Unverrücktes und Unverrückbares*]. The human being is free . . . The freedom of the individual and the developing

<sup>5</sup> MacIntyre 1976 seems to understand Hegel's position merely in this rather tame way.



circumstances are altogether indifferent towards being . . . The individual can also be something else than it originally is inwardly. (*PhG*, MM 3:255)<sup>6</sup>

This Hegelian thesis implies that a mind or mental condition attains a fixed character in only one special case, namely, once the subject in question has *died* and can therefore no longer act. Accordingly, in the same section of the *Phenomenology* Hegel expresses agreement concerning the subjective mind with Solon, “who thought that one could know [the determinate individuality] only from and after the course of the whole life” (*PhG*, MM 3:237).<sup>7</sup> Again, Hegel writes in a famous passage of the Preface of the *Philosophy of Right* that the objective mind or *Volksgeist* can be known (namely, by philosophy) only at the dusk of *its* life:

As the thought of the world [philosophy] only appears in time after actuality has completed its process of formation and finished itself [*sich fertig gemacht hat*] [as often when he is making a philosophically crucial point, Hegel uses a pun here: has *prepared* itself or has *done away with* itself – M.N.F.] . . . When philosophy paints its gray in gray, a shape of life has grown old . . .; the owl of Minerva only begins its flight with the onset of dusk. (*PhR*, MM 7:28)<sup>8</sup>

And again, Hegel says in the *Phenomenology* concerning the absolute mind: “It must be remarked of the Absolute that it is essentially a *result*, that only at the *end* is it what it is in truth” (*PhG*, MM 3:24).

(4) Hegel holds that the mind is not only inseparable from the body and its behavior, but is also *internally* unitary: there are no sharp divisions between mental faculties or activities, e.g., between thought and sensation or between cognition and volition. Hegel already champions this position in his *Philosophy of Spirit* (*Philosophie des Geistes*) from the Jena period (1803/4 and 1805/6) (*JS I* and *JS III*);<sup>9</sup> it plays a central role in the *Phenomenology* (1807) (see Forster 1998, esp. 89–91); and he continues to hold it for the rest of his career, including in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (1830) (e.g., *Enc.* §§8, 379; cf. Bodammer 1969, 28–29).

<sup>6</sup> The correctness of the radical interpretation of these remarks that I am giving here – rather than tamer interpretations of them that might be offered, such as MacIntyre’s (see Note 5) – is confirmed by Hegel’s inferences from the position they express, as they are described next in my text.

<sup>7</sup> Solon’s idea was of course in reality rather different and less radical than Hegel implies here; Hegel is exercising a bit of poetic license.

<sup>8</sup> Incidentally, Hegel’s reference here to philosophy painting “its gray in gray” is an echo of a famous line from Goethe’s *Faust I*: “Grau, teurer Freund, ist alle Theorie” (line 2038).

<sup>9</sup> The version from 1803/4 is also available in G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenenser Realphilosophie* (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1931–32). The 1805/6 version is also available in G. W. F. Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1969).

(5) Hegel maintains that the *Geist*, or mind, is of its very nature and throughout articulated through concepts and language, and that this is one of the main reasons why subjective *Geist* is essentially embedded in objective *Geist* (in society), since language is of its very nature a social achievement. This thesis can already be found in the *Philosophy of Spirit* from the Jena period (especially 1803/4, but also 1805/6); it plays a central role in the *Phenomenology* (1807) (Bodammer 1969, 90–92; Forster 1998, 83–84, 205–6); and Hegel then retains it for the rest of his career, so that it recurs in the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (1830) (*Enc.* §§396, 411, 444).<sup>10</sup>

(6) Hegel holds that the *Geist*, or mind, essentially instantiates the characteristic threefold structure of consciousness that several of his predecessors (in particular, Kant, Reinhold, and Fichte) had already identified: a structure that both includes and distinguishes from each other consciousness of an object, self-consciousness, and consciousness of one's own representation of an object. This position plays an important role in the *Phenomenology*, especially in relation to the subjective mind and the absolute mind (*PhG*, MM 3:28, 38–39, 76–77; cf. Forster 1998, 116–19, 194–95). It can also be found in the *Encyclopaedia* (*Enc.* §§381Z, 415).<sup>11</sup>

(7) Finally, Hegel also holds that the *Geist*, or mind, essentially possesses *freedom*. For example, he already describes *Geist* in the *Phenomenology* as “the absolute substance that in the complete freedom and independence of its opposite, namely of diverse self-consciousnesses that are for-themselves, is their unity: *I* that is *We* and *We* that is *I*” (*PhG*, MM 3:145). We read in the *Encyclopaedia* at §382: “The essence of *Geist* is . . . freedom . . . The substance of *Geist* is freedom.” And Hegel writes in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*: “Just as the substance of matter is weight, likewise we must say that the substance, the essence, of *Geist* is freedom” (MM 12:30).

## II

Where did Hegel's striking concept of *Geist*, or mind, originate? In his introduction to the *Philosophy of Spirit* (*Geist*) of the *Encyclopaedia*, John

<sup>10</sup> For the first half of the thesis – the claim that the mind is essentially articulated through concepts and language – cf. the Preface to the second edition of the *Science of Logic* (1832).

<sup>11</sup> To the extent that the *Encyclopaedia* includes an Anthropology as part of its *Philosophy of Spirit* before treating consciousness in a *Phenomenology of Spirit*, it might seem to be ambiguous in this respect. However, the earlier chapters of the work officially treat only of abstractions from the structures that are described in later chapters, not of independent phenomena. See on this, e.g., *Enc.* §408Z.

Findlay has given a confident and unambiguous answer to this question with which much of the secondary literature would agree:

The notion of *Geist* ... is of course central in Hegel. It is the lineal descendant of the Kantian Transcendental Unity of Self-Consciousness and of the Absolute Ego of Fichte and Schelling. It also claims a collateral source in the Aristotelian *nous* which, in knowing the form of an object, thereby knows itself, and which, in its highest phases, may be described as a pure thinking of thinking. The Greek influence upon Hegel's thought is all-important from the beginning of the Jena period, but the roots of that thought remain Kantian and Fichtean. (Findlay 1971, vii–viii; cf. Solomon 1972; Taylor 1985, 79–80, 82–83; DeVries 1988)

This answer sounds plausible at first hearing, especially if one limits one's focus to the Philosophy of Spirit of the *Encyclopaedia*. There Hegel identifies and praises Aristotle as his main predecessor in the field:

The books of *Aristotle* on the soul with his treatises about special aspects and conditions of it are ... still the best or only work of speculative interest on this subject. The essential purpose of a philosophy of *Geist* can only be to re-introduce the concept into the cognition of *Geist*, and thereby to make available again the sense of those Aristotelian books. (*Enc.* §378)

Accordingly, Hegel concludes his book with a quotation from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* concerning the self-knowledge of divine reason (*nous*) (*Enc.* §577).

Similarly, Hegel seems in the *Encyclopaedia* to confirm at least the core of the other half of Findlay's interpretation. For in *Encyclopaedia* §415 he emphasizes the importance of Kant, Reinhold, and Fichte and attributes to them the threefold model of consciousness (cf. part (6) of Hegel's own model).

Nonetheless, if one examines Findlay's answer more closely, it proves to be dubious. Hegel already developed his emphatic and distinctive use of the word *Geist* very early: to a significant extent already in the additions to *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (1795/96) (MM 1:211ff.), and then a bit later and more fully in *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* (*Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*) (1798–1800), where in particular all three of the applications of the word that are characteristic of the mature Hegel – to human individuals, to whole societies or peoples, and to God – already occur (moreover, in their respective forms of embeddedness within each other) (MM 1:274–418, passim; cf. Haering 1929–38, 1:520ff.). This period in Hegel's career is too early for Aristotle to have had a decisive influence on him. It also coincides with a strong *aversion* on Hegel's part

against philosophy in general and Kant's and Fichte's philosophies in particular (namely, in favor of religion). Thus *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* is largely directed against Kant's practical philosophy, and the closely related *Fragment of a System* from 1800 attacks Fichte's theory of the absolute Ego. A decisive influence from Kant, Fichte, or Schelling therefore seems excluded as well.

The notion that Aristotle or Kant, Fichte, and Schelling had a decisive influence on the birth of Hegel's concept of *Geist* is implausible for other reasons too. Aristotle has no word that even remotely corresponds to Hegel's term *Geist*. The New Testament's word *pneuma*, which had already been translated into German before Hegel as "[heiliger] Geist" and continues to be so translated by Hegel himself,<sup>12</sup> does not yet play any relevant role in Aristotle. Instead, only two words in Aristotle are potentially relevant: *psychê* (soul) and *nous* (reason). But even here Aristotle's conception of the items in question is starkly different from Hegel's. For example, Aristotle does not hold that the *psychê* distinguishes human beings from plants and animals, as Hegel holds *Geist* does. On the contrary, for Aristotle plants and animals *share* possession of a *psychê* with human beings. And for Aristotle there is certainly no "objective" or *Volks-psychê*, nor is there any "absolute" *psychê*. As for Aristotle's concept of *nous*, this is very different from Hegel's concept of *Geist* as well: first, it is much narrower than Hegel's concept of *Geist* (in particular, restricted to intellection), and second, for Aristotle *nous* constitutes precisely the *exception* to his otherwise indeed Hegelian-sounding conception that the *psychê* is essentially bound up with the body, instead being conceived as separable from the body.

Similar points apply to Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. Of course, the word *Geist*, as an old word from everyday German, is used by them.<sup>13</sup> But it is not yet philosophically emphatic for them as it becomes for Hegel. And above all, they use it in philosophical contexts only in application to individual human beings, not in application to either society or God, still less conceived as involving a necessary embeddedness of each in the next – so that the fundamental part (1) of Hegel's concept of *Geist* is still missing. Moreover, the same thing applies to parts (2), (3), (4), and (5) of his

<sup>12</sup> See, for example, already Hegel's *Das Leben Jesu* (1795).

<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, they all use the word in various traditional senses – e.g., *Geist* as *mind*; as *esprit*, or wit; as *ghost*; as "heiliger Geist [holy spirit]"; in the expression "im Geiste von X [in the spirit of X]"; in contradistinction to "letter [*Buchstabe*]," as in St. Paul; etc.

concept of *Geist*. Kant, Fichte, and Schelling anticipate only parts (6) and (7) (the model of consciousness and freedom) at best.<sup>14</sup>

In short, for all its superficial plausibility, Findlay's answer to our question proves to be incorrect.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, this point is reinforced by the fact that there is a much more likely candidate available for the role of decisive influence on the development of Hegel's concept of *Geist*.

### III

That candidate is *Herder*. As previously stated, Hegel's emphatic and distinctive use of the word *Geist* first emerges in the additions to *The Positivity of the Christian Religion* (1795/96) and then especially in *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* (*Der Geist des Christentums und sein Schicksal*) (1798–1800). Both of these works deal with questions concerning the origins and character of Judaism and Christianity that had long been among Herder's favorite topics and, accordingly, they are strongly influenced by Herder (he is named in them and indeed the latter of the two works bears almost the same title as a work of his from the same period: *Vom Geist des Christentums* [1798]). Unlike Hegel's other predecessors just discussed, Herder gave the word *Geist* an emphatic role, as

<sup>14</sup> A few supplementary details: In philosophical contexts, Kant, Fichte, and Schelling usually use the term *Geist* as a very general word for human thinking, willing, feeling, etc. or for the source thereof in the human being – conceiving it as the possession of an individual and as sharply contradistinguished from the body (very much like the English word “mind”). Kant also uses it (presumably in a natural extension of a traditional use of it in the sense of *esprit*, or wit) in the *Anthropology* for a special principle that animates the whole soul, and in the *Critique of Judgment* similarly for a principle that animates works of art and conversations and which in particular produces aesthetic ideas. In Fichte (presumably as an application or extension of St. Paul's contrast between *Geist* and *Buchstabe*) it often connotes the essence of a philosophy (especially Kant's philosophy) in contrast to its form. Schelling sometimes uses the word in these additional philosophical meanings as well.

<sup>15</sup> In fairness to Findlay, a few modest qualifications of this verdict are in order. Concerning Aristotle, Hegel already in *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* ascribes to the Greeks a conception according to which “body and soul remains in one living form” (MM 1:415). This does sound like an echo of Aristotle's conception of the relation between body and soul in *De anima* (cf. Hegel's early discussion of Aristotle as a philosopher more generally in his *Logica et Metaphysica* [1801/2]). Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, Hegel's knowledge of and agreement with Aristotle's concept of a self-knowing divine reason (*nous*) go at least as far back as the year 1802 (Forster 2012). So a certain Aristotelian influence on the early development of parts (2) and (6) of Hegel's concept of *Geist* is not unlikely. Similarly concerning Kant and Fichte, Hegel was already familiar with their relevant positions during the 1790s, and their threefold model of consciousness certainly contributed to his development of part (6) of his concept of *Geist* when he began to accentuate it increasingly during the early Jena period, so they no doubt contributed to his development of part (6) from the start. In addition, Kant and Fichte probably from the start exercised a considerable influence on Hegel's development of part (7) (freedom).

Hegel does (for example, it not only appears in the title of the work just mentioned but also constitutes its central topic). This all suggests that Herder was probably the main source for Hegel's concept of *Geist*.

This hypothesis can be confirmed. So let us go through the seven parts of Hegel's concept of *Geist* in sequence in order to see how each of them arose from Herder. (I will treat the first three parts of it in some detail, then go into the remaining four parts only more briefly.)

Part (1) of Hegel's concept of *Geist* says that having a *Geist* distinguishes human beings from plants and animals. But Herder had already championed this thesis prominently in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of History of Humankind* (1784–91). Part (1) also says that there are three types of *Geist*: subjective *Geist*, objective *Geist* or the *Volksgeist*, and absolute *Geist*. But Herder had already given the word each of these three applications (cf. Schwarz 1938, 27–28). For example, he already applies it to human individuals in *On Thomas Abbt's Writings: A Torso* (1768); to whole peoples in *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774) and *Ideas for a Philosophy of History of Humankind* (1784–91);<sup>16</sup> and to God (indeed, as in Hegel's case, a Christian God) in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778), *God: Some Conversations* (1787/1800), and especially *Vom Geist des Christentums* (1798).<sup>17</sup> Part (1) also says concerning this threefold application of the concept that the human individual is essentially embedded in society and that both of them are essentially embedded in God. But here too Herder was a clear forerunner. For example, he argues in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* that the human individual's language and mind can arise only in a society, and in *God: Some Conversations* (1787) (agreeing with Spinoza) that the human individual and human society are only aspects of God. In short, the fundamental first part of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, part (1), comes entirely from Herder.

Let us now turn to parts (2) and (3). Here again Hegel owes much to Herder. But the situation is also more complicated. For Hegel does not simply take over Herder's ideas here but also subjects them to criticism and

<sup>16</sup> The word *Volksgeist*, which Hegel first used in 1793, does not yet occur in Herder, but it is nonetheless clearly of Herderian provenance. In the *Ideas* Herder writes of the "Geist der Völker," "dem griechischen Geist," the "Geiste der Griechen," "der Römische Geist," "der Gemeingeist Europas," etc.

<sup>17</sup> It is also worth mentioning that Hegel in the additions to *The Positivity of the Christian Religion*, where he first begins to develop his distinctive use of the word *Geist* and explicitly mentions Herder (MM 1:201), begins to use Herder's coinage "der Geist der Zeit" or "Zeitgeist" as well (ibid., 1:212). In addition, Hegel's characteristic term "Weltgeist" is yet another borrowing from Herder.

modifies them accordingly. This is in fact typical of Hegel's whole relationship to Herder. So both because of the intrinsic interest of these two cases and because of their exemplary potential I would like to examine them in a little detail.

Herder already developed a distinctive theory of the nature of the human mind in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778), subsequently extending it to God as well in *God: Some Conversations* (1787). This theory denies that the mind (the *Geist* or *Seele*) is separable from the body: bodies are "perhaps not in nature separated from the soul (*psychê*) by such strong walls as the rooms of our metaphysics separate them"; "In my modest opinion, no *psychology* is possible which is not in each step determinate *physiology*" (Herder 1985–, 4:338, 340). According to Herder's theory, the mind and mental conditions instead consist of force (*Kraft*) – i.e., an essentially embodied cause of specific perceptible modes of bodily behavior that in part transcends them (is not reducible to them).<sup>18</sup> But beyond the two characteristics of forces just implied – on the one hand, essential embodiment and self-manifestation in specific perceptible modes of bodily behavior, and on the other hand, non-reducibility to those modes of behavior – Herder denies having any further knowledge of the nature of forces. Later on, in *God: Some Conversations*, he retains this whole theory of mind, adding the twist that even God is such a "primal force [*Urkraft*]."

There is a tendency these days either to ignore this Herderian theory completely or to reject it out of hand. But this tendency is misguided, in my opinion. For on closer inspection the theory turns out to be extremely attractive. Herder's concept of "force [*Kraft*]" has sometimes been criticized for being vitalistic (see, e.g., Nisbet 1970; Beiser 1987). But Herder's official denial that he has any further knowledge about the nature of force strictly speaking absolves him of this charge (even if in less guarded moments he does tend toward vitalism). And if the word "force [*Kraft*]" sounds antiquated or scientistic in the context of a philosophy of mind, it could without any essential change in Herder's position be replaced by the more modern, less scientistic-sounding term "disposition" – a gloss that Herder indeed himself occasionally employs.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This theory was not completely new with Herder to the extent that Rationalists such as C. Wolff and J.-P. Süßmilch had already written of mental "Kräfte."

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Herder 1985–, 1:719 (where he glosses *Kraft* as *Disposition*). In keeping with the theory that I have just ascribed to Herder, the word "disposition" should of course be understood here in a realist, or non-reductive, way (as it normally is by Wittgenstein, for example), not in an antirealist, or reductive, way (as it usually is by Ryle, for example).



More importantly, Herder's theory, however exactly it is worded, has great intrinsic advantages over its main competitors in the philosophy of mind: dualism, mind–brain identity theories, and behaviorism. It has the advantage over dualism of being naturalistic, especially in the sense of not excluding a fundamental unity or identity of the mental and the physical. It has the advantage over both dualism and mind–brain identity theories that it implies that there is an essential (i.e., conceptual) connection between minds and mental conditions, on the one hand, and corresponding bodily behavior, on the other; which seems right, since, for example, the relation between the desire to eat an apple and modes of bodily behavior that tend toward apple-eating does seem to be a conceptual one rather than merely a contingent one, but which is not captured by either of the other two theories. And it has the advantage over behaviorism that it does not, however, *reduce* minds or mental conditions to corresponding bodily behavior. This again seems correct, since, for example, it sometimes occurs that human beings are in token mental conditions that happen not to manifest themselves in any corresponding bodily behavior (even if the concepts of their types do conceptually imply a normal manifestation in such modes of behavior).

Even Herder's denial that he has any further knowledge about the nature of (the relevant) forces can be seen as an important theoretical virtue rather than a weakness. For it reflects, albeit through a glass darkly, the distinctive and central feature of concepts of mind and mental conditions that, while they conceptually imply corresponding modes of bodily behavior and the existence of a cause thereof, *they do not conceptually imply the more specific nature of this cause*. This feature has recently been exploited to good effect by functionalists in the philosophy of mind in their "multiple realizability" argument against materialist opponents, and it also helps to explain the striking stubbornness of the disagreement in the history of philosophy between competing theories of the nature of the mental (e.g., between dualistic and materialistic theories). In short, Herder's theory turns out to be extremely attractive.<sup>20</sup>

The young Hegel evidently thought so too. For as early as *The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate* he took over not only Herder's distinctive three-fold application of the concept of *Geist* but also Herder's theory of the nature of *Geist*. Accordingly, in that work he champions Herder's position that *Geist* is inseparable from the body (MM 1:414ff.).<sup>21</sup> And, like Herder,

<sup>20</sup> For a fuller discussion of Herder's philosophy of mind, see Forster 2018, ch. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Strictly speaking, Hegel ascribes this position to the Greeks, but he obviously also shares it himself.



he glosses the mental as force (*Kraft*), writing for example of “difference of *Geist*-power, of levels of force [*Kraft*]” (MM 1:354; cf. Schwarz 1938, 11–12). Moreover, in the Jena *Philosophy of Spirit* from 1805/6 he still characterizes the mental as “force [*Kraft*].”<sup>22</sup> And the same even occasionally happens much later, for example, in certain passages of the last edition of the *Encyclopaedia* (*Enc.* §§445, 462; cf. Bodammer 1969, 28, 248).

But Hegel’s early and unqualified appropriation of Herder’s theory was only his first response to it. In the course of time his stance became more critical and his appropriation more qualified. The critique and qualification in question led to the radical parts (2) and (3) of his own concept of *Geist*.

What were the details of this development? The most fundamental step in Hegel’s critique of Herder’s theory consists in a seriously motivated rejection of Herder’s *realist* conception of force (*Kraft*) in general, i.e., of Herder’s conception that force consists not only of corresponding modes of perceptible bodily behavior but also of something further whose nature is unknown, in favor of an *antirealist* conception of force according to which it is reducible to those corresponding modes of behavior and there is nothing unknown that remains. Because of this important general revision of the conception of force, and a certain negative consequence that it seems to entail for explanations in terms of force (namely, that they turn out to be mere implicit tautologies), Hegel eventually tended to drop the word force (*Kraft*) as misleading – though, as I have mentioned, he still continues to use it occasionally. This quite general revision of Herder’s conception of force, when applied to Herder’s theory that the mind and mental conditions are forces in particular, led directly to part (2) of Hegel’s own concept of *Geist*, i.e., to his straightforward identification of the mind and mental conditions with corresponding bodily behavior.

This whole line of thought can be found in three main places in Hegel’s texts which span the whole period 1804–30: first, in his treatment of the concept force (*Kraft*) in the *Logic, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Nature* from 1804/5; second, in the sections “Force and Understanding [*Kraft und Verstand*]” and “The Spiritual Animalkingdom [*Das geistige Tierreich*]” from the *Phenomenology* of 1807; and third, in the treatment of the concept of force (*Kraft*) in paragraph 136 of the *Encyclopaedia* of 1830. So let us take a closer look at each of these formulations in turn.

<sup>22</sup> Hegel, *Jenaer Realphilosophie*: language is a “namengebende Kraft” (183), the Ego is a “Kraft” (186), the *Geist* is a “Kraft” (187), etc.

In the *Logic, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Nature* from 1804/5 Hegel writes: "It is a completely empty difference, this difference between force [*Kraft*] and its expression [*Äußerung*], or inner and outer in general" (*JS II* 46). According to Hegel, explanations in terms of forces are therefore implicitly only tautologies that repeat the *explananda* in the *explanans* – the phenomena that are supposed to be explained in the explanation – and should therefore be avoided, and this is in particular true of explanations in terms of *mental* forces:

The content of appearance and force is one and the same; the whole of expressions gets summarized in the force; however internally separated the relation is, it amounts to a unity in name, . . . and the separation that is posited here is one foreign to the relation itself . . . the tautology of the explanation being unaffected by it. It follows from this that for cognition there is no force, that cognition does not observe the moving, the accelerating force, but the motion, the acceleration, etc., and just as little the force of imagination, memory, or the faculty of imagination, memory, understanding, reason, etc., but rather imagination, memory, understanding, reason itself. (*JS II* 61)

The *Phenomenology* of 1807 essentially repeats the same line of thought, but with somewhat more refined arguments. As I have explained in more detail elsewhere (Forster 1998, 65–67), the section "Force and Understanding [*Kraft und Verstand*]" develops a more nuanced argument against explanations in terms of forces that mainly consists of the following dilemma: if one understands the forces in question in a *realist* way, then the alleged *necessity* of their relation to the putatively resultant phenomena remains a mystery, and, moreover, the forces themselves, together with their relation to those phenomena, remain unknowable; if, on the other hand, one understands them in an *antirealist* way, then while those two problems are avoided, the new problem arises that the putative explanations turn out to be mere tautologies. In a later section of the *Phenomenology*, "The Spiritual Animal Kingdom [*Das geistige Tierreich*]" – which, on my interpretation of the work, is concerned with Herder's philosophical standpoint throughout – Hegel draws the consequences of this argument for Herder's theory of mind, in particular by dropping Herder's realist conception of force and accordingly revising his theory of the mind in a way that turns it into a straightforward identification of the mind and mental conditions with corresponding bodily behavior. The almost immediately preceding sections on "Logical and Psychological Laws" and "Physiognomy and Phrenology" have already presented, criticized, and rejected versions of the theories of dualism and mind–brain

identity. Now in the section “The Spiritual Animal Kingdom” Hegel implicitly ascribes to Herder what he takes to be the much more promising theory that mental conditions consist entirely of corresponding bodily actions (in their contexts):

The difference . . . between a sort of thing that is for consciousness only *within itself* and an independent actuality outside of itself has collapsed . . . The whole action does not go beyond itself either as circumstances or as *purpose* or as means. (*PhG*, MM 3:296–98; cf. 242–43)

Finally, Hegel repeats the same line of argument in all essentials in the *Encyclopaedia* of 1830, but this time he mentions Herder explicitly, criticizing and rejecting his realist conception of force as something that transcends the phenomena and is therefore unknowable, and especially his conception of God as such a primal force (*Urkraft*):

Force . . . is finite; for the content, the *one-and-the-same* of force and expression, is only *in itself* this identity . . . Because of this inadequacy of the form the content too is merely contingent . . . It is not yet truly identical with the form. (*Enc.* §136)

If this inadequacy is not recognized,

this leads to the confusion of conceiving God as force [*Kraft*], a confusion that especially afflicts Herder’s God. People often say that the nature of force itself is unknown and only its expression gets known. On the one hand, the whole determination of the content of force is the same as that of the expression; so consequently the explanation of an appearance in terms of a force is an empty tautology. What is said to remain unknown is therefore in reality nothing but the empty form of reflection-into-self that is the only thing that distinguishes force from expression . . . This form adds nothing at all to the content and the law that are supposed to be known from the appearance alone. One also everywhere hears it asserted that nothing is thereby said about force; so it is unclear why the form of force has been introduced into the sciences at all. – But on the other hand, the nature of force is indeed something unknown because the necessity both of the connection of the content within itself and of its connection insofar as it has a determination through an other outside it is missing. (*Enc.* §136)

Moreover,

The so often repeated claim that one can only know the expression of forces but not these themselves must be firmly rejected as groundless because force consists simply in its expression and we therefore in knowing the totality of expression in the form of law at the same time know force itself . . . People speak in empirical psychology of the force of memory, the force of imagination, the force of volition, and all sorts of other forces of the soul. Here the

need re-emerges of becoming conscious of these various forces as likewise a unified whole, and this need would not be satisfied by for instance reducing the various forces to a primal force [*Urkraft*] common to them all. Such a primal force would only be an empty abstraction, just as empty of content as the abstract thing-in-itself. A further problem is that the relation of force and its expression is essentially the mediated relation and that it therefore contradicts the very concept of force when force is conceived as primal or as self-sufficient. – It is true that despite this situation concerning the nature of force we put up with it when people say that the existing world is an expression of divine forces, but we will take exception to considering God himself as mere force because force remains a subordinate and finite determination. (*Enc.* §136, MM 8:268–73)

In short, Hegel's early and provisional acceptance of Herder's theory that the mind and mental conditions consist of force, modified by Hegel's subsequent rejection of Herder's realist conception of force in general in favor of an antirealist conception of it (together with a recognition of certain negative consequences that this has for the claims of force to be explanatory and a corresponding tendency to drop the word), led to part (2) of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, or mind: his straightforward identification of the mind and mental conditions with corresponding bodily behavior.

But, in addition to this argument for part (2) of his concept of *Geist* in the form of a sort of immanent critique of Herder's position, Hegel also has a second argument for it that is more or less *independent* of previous theories. This additional argument essentially consists of an account according to which, when closely scrutinized, our everyday criteria for ascribing minds or mental conditions to people turn out always to treat their engaging in certain sorts of bodily behavior as both *necessary* and *sufficient* for the presence of their minds or mental conditions – which, in Hegel's view, excludes alternative theories about the nature of the mental (in particular, dualism and mind–brain identity theories) and proves that the mental consists in corresponding bodily behavior.

This argument appears mainly in two of Hegel's works, the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopaedia*. The relevant section of the *Phenomenology* is that on "Physiognomy and Phrenology." First, Hegel argues there that the alternative theories are untenable and his own theory correct because according to our everyday criteria corresponding bodily behavior is always *necessary* for ascribing mental conditions:

When [a person's] work and his inner possibility, ability, or intention are opposed, it is the former alone that should be considered his true actuality, even if he deceives himself about this and, turning away from his action and

inwardly, claims to be something else in this inside than he really is in the deed [*in der Tat*]. (*PbG*, MM 3:243)<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, he argues concerning the special (and perhaps especially interesting) case of the understanding of concepts that this necessarily involves corresponding linguistic behavior:

Although one often hears it said that reasonable people do not care about the word but about the *thing* itself, one should not infer from this a permission to refer to a thing with a word that does not belong to it; for this is at once incompetence and deceit, to say and pretend that one only lacks the right *word* and hide from oneself that in reality the thing, i.e., the concept, is missing; if the concept were there, it would also find its correct word. (*PbG*, MM 3:247–48)

Second, Hegel also argues in the same section that the alternative theories are untenable and his own theory correct because our everyday criteria always treat corresponding bodily behavior as *sufficient* for ascribing mental conditions. Thus, as we saw earlier, he writes there:

The true being of a human being is rather his deed [*Tat*]; in this individuality is actual, and it is this that sublates what is merely meant in its two sides [i.e., as something inexpressibly inner and as a motionless bodily being] ... The deed ... is murder, theft or charity, brave deed, etc., and it can be said of it what it is. The deed *is* this, and the individual human being *is* what *the deed is*. (*PbG*, MM 3:242–43)

Hegel later gives essentially the same argument in §140 of the *Encyclopaedia* (in the process identifying certain dubious motives that in his opinion sometimes lead to contrary judgments and which are therefore merely seductive (self-)deceptions): “The human being, as he is outwardly, i.e. in his actions (not, to be sure in his merely bodily outwardness [e.g., face, skull, or even brain – M.N.F.]), so is he inwardly” (*Enc.* §140). We know

what to think when someone in the face of his miserable performances or indeed contemptible deeds appeals to the inwardness of his allegedly excellent intentions and dispositions, which is supposed to be distinct from them. It can indeed happen in individual cases that good intentions get thwarted by unfavorable external circumstances, purposeful plans reduced to nought in their execution; but in general here too the essential unity of inner and outer is valid so that one must say that what the person *does* is

<sup>23</sup> Hegel puns here again in order to make his point: “*in der Tat*” means both “really” and “in the deed.”

what he *is*, and one should answer the lying vanity that flatters itself with the glow of inner excellence with the saying of the gospels "By their fruits shall ye know them." This great saying is valid, just as in the first instance in ethical and religious respects, so also in connection with scientific and artistic accomplishments. Concerning the latter, for example an insightful teacher who recognizes decided talents in a boy may express the opinion that there is a Raphael or a Mozart in him and what is achieved will then teach to what extent such an opinion was well-grounded. But if an incompetent painter or a bad poet console themselves with the idea that inwardly they are full of high ideals, then this is a bad consolation, and if they demand that one judge them not by their achievements but by their intentions, then it is quite right to reject such a pretense without more ado as empty and groundless. Conversely, it also often happens that people in judging others who have achieved something genuine and good make use of the false distinction between inner and outer in order to claim that this achievement is only outward, but that inwardly they were concerned with something quite different, with the satisfaction of their vanity or other contemptible passions. This is the disposition of envy . . . And when in addition people speak of hypocrisy in connection with the praiseworthy achievements of others in order to thwart them, it should be said against this that while it is true that the human being can dissemble in individual cases and hide many things, he cannot do this with his innerness in general, which inevitably reveals itself in the *decursus vitae*, so that here too it must be said that the human being is nothing but the series of his deeds. (*Enc.* §140)

In addition, as in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel in the *Encyclopaedia* applies this general line of argument to the special case of understanding concepts (or thought) and its necessary connection with corresponding linguistic behavior. Thus he writes in §462:

It is in names that we *think* . . . We . . . only have determinate, actual thoughts when we give them the form of objectivity, . . . i.e. the shape of outwardness, and indeed of the sort of outwardness that simultaneously bears the imprint of the highest inwardness. The only such inward-outward thing is the articulated sound, the word. To want to think without words . . . therefore shows itself to be a piece of nonsense . . . The unutterable is in truth only something unclear, brewing . . . that only becomes clear when it can attain expression in words. (*Enc.* §462)

So much for Hegel's arguments in support of part (2) of his concept of *Geist*. Let us turn next to part (3): the principled revisability even of seemingly "past" mental conditions (not merely of *judgments* about them or of them *for the future*) for as long as the subject still exists and can act, the subject achieving a fixed mental character only at death.

Herder had already implied a somewhat similar position to this at one point in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (1772):

We are always growing out of a childhood, however old we may be, are ever in motion, restless, unsatisfied. The essential feature of our life is never enjoyment but always progression and we have never been human beings until we – have lived out our lives. (Herder 1985–, 1:773)

But Hegel's version of the position is considerably more radical than Herder's.

Hegel's radical version follows almost inevitably from his commitment to principle (2), i.e., from his identification of the mind and mental conditions with corresponding bodily behavior. Why? For two main reasons. First, in order to be at all plausible, such an identification cannot be restricted to bodily behavior that precedes the mental condition in question or coincides with it temporally, but must also include bodily behavior that is *future* in relation to it, since it often happens, for example, that the sole bodily behavior that supports the ascription to a person of a particular decision that she makes occurs only *after* the decision. Second, this relevance of future bodily behavior cannot plausibly be given a temporal limit (short of the subject's death). For, as long as a subject lives and can act, it is always possible that she will produce new bodily behavior that forces us to revise the judgments that we have so far made concerning her "past" mental conditions.

This can perhaps be best illustrated by focusing on the level of understanding concepts or meanings. In Hegel's view (and indeed probably also in fact), understanding concepts or meanings plays a fundamental role in the human mind, since all (or at least almost all) human mental conditions essentially involve implicit conceptual articulation. For this reason, the situation at the level of understanding concepts or meanings has important consequences for mental conditions *in general*. Now, as Nelson Goodman with his famous "green"/"grue" and "blue"/"bleen" example (Goodman 1965), and Saul Kripke with his famous "plus"/"quus" example (Kripke 1982), have vividly shown, when we make judgments about someone's concepts or meanings on the basis of our knowledge of her linguistic behavior up to the point at which we make the judgments, it always remains possible – however uniformly positive and rich the data gathered so far may have been, and however long it may have continued in that manner – that her future linguistic behavior will take a turn that we did not expect and which will force us to revise the judgments that we have formed. And because of the aforementioned fundamental role of

understanding concepts and meanings in the human mind, this situation moreover entails a similar possibility in connection with virtually all of the judgments that we have formed concerning her *other* mental conditions – i.e., those that are *not* (at least not primarily or explicitly) conceptual-semantic – as well, to the extent that these too are of their very nature implicitly articulated through concepts or meanings. For example, if it were happen next year, in the light of an unexpected turn in the linguistic behavior of a person we know, that contrary to our assumptions she had always meant with the word “blue” not the concept *blue* but instead the concept *bleen* (to borrow Goodman's example), then this revision of our previous judgments about her conceptual understanding would inevitably also entail corresponding revisions of our previous judgments that, for instance, she had always believed that the sky was blue, she had wanted to buy a blue car in December of 2010, she had wondered whether there were blue frogs on Madagascar, and so on.

So much for the first three parts of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, or mind. Let me now turn more briefly to the remaining parts. Here too Herder was an important influence. Thus, part (4), Hegel's thesis that the mind is a unity, and that it is in particular a mistake to separate thought from sensation or cognition from volition, again comes mainly from Herder. For precisely this sort of unity had already been the central thesis of Herder's *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (cf. Schwarz 1938, 11–12; Taylor 1975; Forster 1998, ch. 2).

Part (5), Hegel's thesis that the human mind is essentially conceptual and linguistic, and that it is therefore essentially embedded in society, also derives from Herder (cf. Taylor 1985, 92; Forster 2011). For Herder had already championed both halves of this thesis in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul*.<sup>24</sup>

How about parts (6) and (7) of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, his threefold model of consciousness and his inclusion of freedom? There is some temptation to see these two parts simply as exceptions to the rule, as borrowings from other sources, especially Kant, Reinhold, and Fichte, that were grafted onto the more fundamental Herderian parts of Hegel's model of *Geist* (which would of course do no real harm to the main thesis of this essay). But in fact, even here Hegel was probably also influenced by Herder to a certain extent.

<sup>24</sup> In fact, there is a whole series of continuities and borrowings linking Herder's philosophy of language with Hegel's, of which this is only one example. See on this subject Forster 2011.



Thus, concerning part (6) (the model of consciousness), Herder's *Treatise on the Origin of Language* had already championed a thesis that a certain process of objectivization is essential to the human mind,<sup>25</sup> and his *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* had argued that the human mind also essentially involves self-consciousness, which necessarily accompanies all of its other mental functions.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly concerning part (7) (freedom), Herder had already in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* depicted a sort of freedom as an essential property of *Geist* (Herder 1985–, 4:362–63).

In short, all seven parts of Hegel's distinctive conception of *Geist* have their origins either mainly or at least partly in Herder.

#### IV

Does Hegel anywhere discuss Herder's decisive influence on the development of his own concept of *Geist*? If the interpretation of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, and in particular of its section "The Spiritual Animal Kingdom [*Das geistige Tierreich*]," that I have given in my Hegel book (Forster 1998, 332–48) and developed further in a more recent article (Forster 2008) is correct, then the answer is Yes.

On the interpretation I develop there, the "detailed history of the formation of consciousness itself up to Science" that Hegel already projects in the Introduction of the *Phenomenology* and which culminates at the end of the "Reason" chapter is (among other things) a sort of intellectual autobiography within which the section "The Spiritual Animal Kingdom" occupies a key position near the climax, and this section depicts Herder's standpoint throughout.

Moreover, as the title "The Spiritual Animal Kingdom [*Das geistige Tierreich*]" already intimates – this is the first place in the *Phenomenology* where the word "Geist" appears in the title of a chapter or section – Hegel is of the opinion that this standpoint was the first in history to arrive at a genuine concept of *Geist* (after all earlier standpoints, such as those

<sup>25</sup> This is the core of Herder's central conception in the work that the human mind is distinguished from animals' minds by "taking-awareness [*Besonnenheit*]," as illustrated by his famous example of the objectivizing manner in which we perceive the bleating of a lamb.

<sup>26</sup> Herder 1985–, 4:356: "Many experiences [show that] what in the lower forces of the soul is not apperception, consciousness of self-feeling and of self-activity, belongs only to the sea of inflowing sensuality that incites the soul, . . . but not to the soul itself . . . In imagination and memory, recall and prediction, likewise the one divine force of our soul, 'inner inward-looking activity, consciousness, apperception,' necessarily shows itself."

treated in the almost immediately preceding sections on "Logical and Psychological Laws" and "Physiognomy and Phrenology," had still failed to do so).<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore, Hegel's more specific characterization of the standpoint he depicts in "The Spiritual Animal Kingdom" confirms this reading in detail. Concerning part (1) of his own concept of *Geist*, the title of the section in question already implies that this standpoint holds the view that being a *Geist* is the differentia of human beings in contrast to mere animals (a view that Herder had in fact championed in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of History of Humankind*).<sup>28</sup> And the subsequent course of the section deliberately moves from the individual human being to society to the Absolute in sequence and thereby also ascribes to the standpoint in question a conception of the three forms of *Geist* in their embeddedness in each other (just as Herder had in fact conceived them).

Concerning part (2) of Hegel's own concept of *Geist*, the conception that the mental consists of bodily behavior, as we have already seen, the section ascribes precisely such a conception to the standpoint in question:

The difference . . . between a sort of thing that is for consciousness only *within itself* and an independent actuality outside of itself has collapsed . . . The whole action does not go beyond itself either as circumstances or as *purpose* or as means. (*PhG*, MM 3:296–98)

Moreover, as we also have already seen, Herder really had in his conception of the mental as *Kraft* taken at least a big step toward such a position.

<sup>27</sup> Hegel had already in the chapter "Self-Consciousness" looked ahead to the coming to consciousness of a clear concept of *Geist*, writing there: "In that a self-consciousness is the object, it is just as much I as object. – Here the concept of *Geist* is already present for us. [Note, only "for us," not yet for consciousness itself; for this distinction, cf. the Introduction of the work. – M.N.F.] What has still to happen for consciousness is the experience of what *Geist* is, this absolute substance that in the complete freedom and independence of its opposite, namely of diverse self-consciousnesses that are for-themselves, is their unity: *I* that is *We* and *We* that is *I*" (*PhG*, MM 3:145). Exactly this happens in the section "Das geistige Tierreich," as can be seen not only from its title but also from the following introductory passage there: "Self-consciousness has now grasped its own concept . . . of being in the certainty of itself all reality and purpose and essence is for it now the self-moving interpenetration of the universal . . . and individuality" (*ibid.*, 3:292).

<sup>28</sup> Hegel's title also implies a measure of criticism of Herder's position in this area, though, because in Hegel's view it exaggerates the continuity between human beings and animals (for which reason he means the title somewhat ironically). Cf. *VHGesch* 161ff., where Hegel expresses agreement with the implication contained in theories of an original condition of human perfection that human beings cannot have emerged from a state of animal dumbness: "This is correct; humankind could not arise from animal dumbness, though indeed from human dumbness . . . Animal humanity is something completely different than animality. *Geist* makes the beginning; but this is initially in itself, it is natural *Geist*, in which, though, the character of humanity is thoroughly imprinted."

Concerning part (4) of Hegel's own concept of *Geist*, the section ascribes to the standpoint involved a model of *Geist* as unified, in particular a model of it according to which cognition and volition are inseparable from each other – so that, for example, such central concepts in the section as “acting [*Tun*],” “actuality [*Wirklichkeit*],” and “the matter itself [*die Sache selbst*]” systematically erase the usual division between cognition and volition. Moreover, as we have already noted, Herder in *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* really had championed such a model of the mind as unitary.

Concerning part (5) of Hegel's own concept of *Geist*, the idea that the individual mind is essentially articulated through language and is therefore essentially social, Hegel already in a preview that he gives of the standpoint of this section a little earlier in the “Reason” chapter calls it, significantly, the standpoint of “individuality that expresses itself in language [*sich aussprechende Individualität*]” (*PhG*, MM 3:270). Moreover, as we have seen, he implies the embeddedness of the individual mind within society in the course of the section itself.

And these points can be extended further. In short, Hegel in this section of the *Phenomenology* implicitly ascribes to Herder's standpoint not only the first discovery of a genuine concept of *Geist* but also virtually all of the essential components of his own concept of *Geist*.

It is true that later, in the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel tended to be quieter about Herder's decisive influence on his own concept of *Geist*, instead parading the widely respected figure of Aristotle and to a lesser extent the prestigious tradition of Kant, Reinhold, and Fichte as his forerunners. But the reasons for this are not far to seek. They lie partly in Hegel's general miserliness in giving credit to contemporary influences (compare, for example, his neglectful treatment of Schelling and Hölderlin). They lie partly in his perception of a certain lack of “scientificness [*Wissenschaftlichkeit*]” in Herder, of which, while conceding that Herder has grasped the correct philosophical principle, he already complains in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802) – by which he means both a lack of *systematicity* (something that Herder, as a principled and powerful critic of the sort of systematicity that Hegel has in mind, would have readily admitted) and certain supposed inadequacies in the details of Herder's positions, such as those that have been discussed in this essay. But they lie above all in the simple and rather human fact that by about 1800 Herder, due to his independent-minded and outspoken criticisms of his contemporaries, had managed to alienate both of the two main intellectual power-blocs in Germany – Goethe, Schiller, and their followers, on the one hand; Kant, Fichte,

and their followers, on the other – so that admitting admiration for or intellectual indebtedness to Herder had become almost tantamount to professional suicide. Still, even during this later period and under these circumstances Hegel's detailed critical discussion of Herder's theory of *Geist* in *Encyclopaedia* §136 (as discussed earlier) continues to constitute a sort of reluctant confession of its decisive influence on his own.<sup>29</sup>

## V

So much for the origin and character of Hegel's concept of *Geist*. However, it is important not to confuse the interpretation of a position with its evaluation. It is one thing to find an exciting and original position in a thinker, but quite another to say that it is actually right. So we still need to broach the question: Is Hegel's concept of *Geist* correct?

A full answer to this question would be a long undertaking. So let me limit my remarks here to parts (2) and (3) of Hegel's concept.

I have tried to show that Hegel arrived at these two theses largely through a seriously motivated revision of Herder's theory. In doing so, I have also emphasized that Herder's original theory was very attractive. I would now like to go a step further and say that – notwithstanding the cleverness of Hegel's critique of Herder's theory and the interest of the two Hegelian theses that emerged from that critique – it seems to me likely that Herder's theory actually remains superior to Hegel's. For, first, Herder's theory agrees with certain important everyday assumptions and experiences concerning the mental that Hegel's theory contradicts. Second, Herder's theory can almost certainly survive Hegel's critique of it and the competition to it represented by the two theses that Hegel infers from his critique. And third, Hegel's *independent* argument for those two theses is flawed as well, namely, because it distorts, and has to distort, the everyday criteria to which it appeals, whereas Herder's theory does justice to them. Let me go into each of these points briefly in turn.

Concerning the first point, there are a series of important everyday assumptions and experiences relating to the mind and mental conditions to which Herder's theory does justice but which Hegel's theory contradicts. *Prima facie* this constitutes a considerable advantage for Herder's

<sup>29</sup> It is perhaps worth mentioning here that not only Hegel but also several of his contemporaries were strongly influenced in their concepts of *Geist* by Herder, including Schleiermacher (both in his writings from the 1790s and in his later lectures on the philosophy of mind). In a later generation so too was Nietzsche. For more on this, see Forster 2018, ch. 5.

theory, even if not an absolutely decisive one (as Hegel in particular would emphasize, since he does not in general accord “common sense” much authority). The following are three specific examples: (a) Herder’s theory does justice to the everyday experience that people are often in token mental conditions that happen not to get expressed in corresponding bodily behavior of theirs at all. For example, it occurs to someone during a casual conversation at a cocktail party that the person to whom she is talking is a bore, but she keeps quiet about this out of politeness, kindness, or whatever, and she forgets all about it soon afterward, so that even later it never finds behavioral expression. On the other hand, Hegel’s theory contradicts this everyday experience. (b) Herder’s theory does justice to the everyday assumption that when we correctly ascribe a mental condition to someone at a particular point or period of time, the mental fact in question consists entirely of something that belongs to this point or period of time, so that future facts play no essential role in it (although they may of course be relevant as mere evidence for it). On the other hand, Hegel’s theory contradicts this everyday assumption. (c) Herder’s theory does justice to the everyday assumption that mental conditions are often *efficient causes* of corresponding bodily behavior. On the other hand, Hegel’s theory, by implying that they are instead *constituted* by such behavior, contradicts this everyday assumption.<sup>30</sup>

Concerning the second point, Hegel’s critique of Herder’s realist conception of force (*Kraft*) – from which Hegel infers his own two contrary theses – seems dubious. In its mature form it amounts to the following line of argument: A realist conception of force has two fatal flaws. First, because it sharply distinguishes between a force (or at least an essential aspect of a force) and its appearances, it cannot do justice to the concept of the *necessity* of the connection of a force (or of the relevant essential aspect of it) with its appearances that is implicitly contained in the very concept of a force. Second, a realist conception of force condemns the specific nature of a force to *unknowability*. According to Hegel, these two problems can be avoided only by instead thinking of force in an antirealist way (i.e., as identical with its appearances) – in which case, though, explanations in

<sup>30</sup> Concerning (c), cf. Taylor 1985, 78–80, 89–90, which essentially ascribes just this sort of contradiction to Hegel. Quante 2004, 178–81, points out that Hegel usually avoids characterizing the relation between the will and its deeds as a causal one, but also claims that Hegel’s position would nonetheless be compatible with such a view. Quante’s former point seems to me correct and a helpful piece of further evidence in support of the interpretation that Taylor and I share here, but Quante’s latter point seems to me mistaken for reasons that the present essay already should have made sufficiently clear.

terms of forces turn out to be implicitly mere tautologies and therefore not genuine explanations at all. However, this line of criticism has weaknesses. For one thing, it seems just dogmatically to assume that realist (or, at least, *more* realist) attempts to vindicate the necessity that pertains to relations of force, or to causal relations more generally (for instance, Kant's attempt), must fail, which is not at all obvious. For another thing, Herder's concession of the *unknownness* of the specific nature of realist forces need not imply a (no doubt indeed problematic) concession of their *unknowability*, as Hegel seems to assume. On the face of it, it could quite well be the case that further research would make it possible to determine the specific nature of particular realist forces more precisely (for instance – to select an especially relevant example – that further research would show that the forces that constitute a mind or a mental condition are actually physical in nature). In short, Hegel's critique of Herder's realist conception of force does not seem cogent, and his inference from it to his own alternative theses concerning the mental therefore seems unwarranted.<sup>31</sup>

Concerning the third point, Hegel's *independent* argument for part (2) of his concept of *Geist* (and thereby indirectly for part (3) as well) – namely, that our everyday criteria make corresponding bodily behavior both necessary and sufficient for mental conditions – turns out to be dubious on closer inspection as well. For one thing, our everyday criteria do *not* in fact acknowledge such a necessity or sufficiency. On the contrary, they allow that in particular cases mental conditions may very well occur without corresponding bodily behavior (as the example of the cocktail party shows), and conversely, they allow that however uniformly positive, rich, and long-lasting the evidence afforded by a person's behavior in support of ascribing a particular mental condition to him may be, it always still remains possible that his future behavior will force us to revise that ascription (as the examples borrowed from Goodman and Kripke show). For another thing, while it is true that part (3) of Hegel's concept of *Geist* attempts to accommodate such facts as these by acknowledging that corresponding behavior may be provisionally unavailable and that even the best evidenced judgments are still subject to revision in the future, this

<sup>31</sup> It should perhaps be added here in further criticism of Hegel's overall argument that the fact that antirealist explanations of *regularities* in terms of forces would turn out to be implicitly tautological and would therefore fail to constitute genuine explanations does not entail that such explanations of *particular cases* would be merely tautological or fail to provide genuine explanations. Arguably, identifying a particular case as an example of a broader regularity *can* explain it (as it does in Bertrand Russell's model of scientific explanation by means of general laws that are not even causal, for example).

position is problematic as well. First, it achieves this accommodation only by contradicting the argument in question, since it implies that in fact corresponding behavior that has already been produced never *is* necessary or sufficient for mental conditions (unless the subject's life has ended). And second, it also remains intrinsically inadequate, since it still fails to do justice to the more radical possibilities that our everyday criteria imply that a mental condition may occur that is never manifested in bodily behavior *at all* (as in the example of the cocktail party) or that is at least never manifested in a *corresponding* way (imagine, for example, that Goodman's grue/bleen person dies just before the critical date that would have revealed his unusual conceptualization). Herder's theory again turns out to be superior here. For, unlike Hegel's theory, it can quite consistently do full justice to our everyday criteria: the conception of a realist force or disposition that in particular token cases never gets expressed or never gets expressed in a way that corresponds to its character involves no self-contradiction.

In short, at least in connection with parts (2) and (3) of Hegel's concept of *Geist*, Herder's theory was not only a decisive *influence* but also constitutes a formidable *competitor*.

## VI

In conclusion, I hope that this essay has presented and made plausible several surprising theses: first, that Hegel's concept of *Geist* is far more radical than it is usually taken to be; second, that the most important influence on it was neither Aristotle nor the tradition of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling but instead Herder; and third, that Herder's theory of *Geist* not only was highly attractive, but also has resources that arguably make it in important respects superior to Hegel's modified version of it.

PART II

*Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*





# *Hegel's Critique of Theoretical Spirit* *Kant's Functionalist Cognitive Psychology in Context*

*Kenneth R. Westphal*

## 1 Introduction

Kant's Critical theory of cognitive judgment in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is deeply functionalist: it identifies a host of integrated cognitive functions which must be exercised by any being which or who integrates sensory information over time through space using twelve basic forms of judgment. Most of these cognitive capacities and functioning Kant ascribes to the sub-personal transcendental power of imagination, "a blind but indispensable function of the soul" (*Seele*; *CPR* A78/B103); only apperceptive functions of cognitive judgment – explicit judgments and judgments – are effected by understanding and reason (cf. *CPR* A79/B105–6, B152, 162 n.). Kant's transcendental idealism largely precludes investigating how our natural psychophysiology does or can enable our exercise of these a priori conditions necessary for experience and knowledge. For sound reasons, Hegel rejects Kant's transcendental idealism, and thus poses the question, How can our natural psychophysiology enable our exercise of these a priori conditions necessary for our apperception, experience, and knowledge? This chapter examines Hegel's developments of Kant's cognitive psychology in his treatment of "Theoretical Spirit," the first part of his "Psychology," following upon his "Anthropology" and (encyclopedic) "Phenomenology of Spirit," and followed by "Practical Spirit," which concludes this first part of Hegel's encyclopedic *Philosophy of Spirit*, "Subjective Spirit," thus preparing his subsequent accounts of "objective" (social) and of "absolute" spirit.

## 2 Hegel, Kant, Aristotle

Hegel's deep and abiding admiration for Aristotle, and especially for Aristotle's account of the soul and of human action, he repeatedly emphasizes (Mure 1940; Chireghin 1989; Movia 1995; Ferrarin 2004). That, and how, Hegel aims to reconstruct and to integrate Aristotle's and Kant's

cognitive psychology has not, however, been sufficiently appreciated. In part this results from undue stress on Kant's transcendental idealism, which would appear to preclude even Aristotle's liberal, non-reductive form of naturalism, especially as regards our human form of mindedness. Yet the recently published transcripts of Hegel's lectures on history of philosophy (1825–26) corroborate Hegel's aim unambiguously:

Up to the most recent times our best account of psychology is the one we have from Aristotle, and likewise for Aristotle's thoughts on the will, on freedom, on the further specifics regarding imputation, intention, etc. Only one must take the trouble to study his views and to translate them into our way of speaking, of representing, and of thinking – admittedly a difficult challenge. (*VGP* 2, *V* 8, 3:90–91, 590–96/*B* 2:255)<sup>1</sup>

Hegel was no less emphatic and ambitious in his lectures on philosophy of spirit (1827–28):

Empirical psychology presents the soul as dissolve and digested [*aufgelöst*], and what Aristotle wrote on the topic is still to be recommended as the most philosophical. As with everything else, he regarded also the soul speculatively, in its concept; and philosophy must again return to this way of regarding the topic. (*VGeist*, *V*. 13:11–12)

The urgency of philosophical reform especially in philosophical psychology and philosophy of subjective spirit Hegel noted emphatically also in his published remark to *RPh* §4R (1821); his “return to Aristotle” is deeply informed by Kant's Critical philosophy (cf. Westphal 2018a).

One impediment to integrating Aristotle's and Kant's cognitive psychologies is Kant's transcendental idealism. Hegel had identified decisive internal difficulties in that view by 1802; in commenting on *Enc.* §448, Hegel rejects Kant's assimilation of space and time themselves to nothing but human forms of sensory receptivity (*CPR* A373, A35, 143, 267–68/*B* xxv, 51, 185, 323–24, 347; *Enc.* §448Z, MM 10:253). Rescinding Kant's transcendental idealism affords better appreciation of two important, unappreciated features of Kant's philosophical psychology. One is that Kant typically uses an entirely ordinary German term, “*Gemüt*” – rendered in English as “mind” – to render “*animus*”: the Latin term for “*psyche*” (Aso et al. 1989, 21, 535), familiar to Anglophones from the common title of Aristotle's main study of *psyche* (psychology), *De anima*. Kant's terminological choice of *Gemüt* to render *animus* (or *psychē*)

<sup>1</sup> Translations from German sources are my own.

artfully avoids opting for either pole of Cartesian dualism. Kant's point about our cognitive capacities accords with Aristotle's: the primary concern is what our cognitive capacities, functions, and functioning *are*, what they *do*, and what they *enable* us to do. How they are materially constituted – in what stuffs they consist – is interesting, though not to be discovered philosophically, and answering that question does not address philosophical issues about the scope, character, limits, or validity of human experience, knowledge, or action. Likewise, while Hegel uses the term “soul” (*Seele*), he uses that term and also *Geist* or “spirit” to focus on our functions, activities, and achievements, and to avoid the inherited dualism of physical versus mental substance – a dualism which remains pervasive – if implicit – today (Westphal 2016b, 2017a).<sup>2</sup>

Another important feature of Kant's views is his thorough agreement with Aristotle about *Homo sapiens sapiens* being *zōon politikon*, and why so: Whatever natural cognitive capacities we have innately, we can only develop, master, and exercise through *education*, formal and informal, through our families, communities, educational institutions, and cultural traditions. Even our most fundamental concepts, the twelve Categories, Kant holds, are not innate but acquired, not from experience, but “originally,” upon promptings by sensory stimulation (*CPR* B167, cf. B1, *Ak* 7:222–23, 17:492, 18:8, 12; Longuenesse 1998, 221 n. 17, 243, 252–53). Thus not only Hegel (*Enc.* §410R; *RPh* §§4, 151; *VGPh* 3, MM 19:107–9) but also Kant agrees with Aristotle about our properly developed, properly functioning human nature being our second, socially acquired nature (Westphal 2019a).

<sup>2</sup> Though some translators (still) use “mind,” in quoting from Hegel's texts I have accordingly used “spirit” for “*Geist*.” So doing puts the interpretive emphasis where it belongs: understanding what Hegel means by “*Geist*” or “spirit,” why he characterizes it as he does, and how he purports to justify such characterizations. Supernatural misinterpretations of Hegel's views are ruled out by what may be regarded as a cardinal principle of Hegel's philosophy: posit no transcendent entities! The long-lingering presumption that Hegel espoused some especially ambitious, utterly mad form of rationalism presupposes a decidedly pre-Critical empiricist taxonomy of philosophical options. Hegel is altogether a Critical philosopher in Kant's mold, *sans* transcendental idealism (Westphal 2018a). That Critical philosophy not only survives but is improved by rescinding transcendental idealism is widely disregarded, also by many of Hegel's devotees. Transcendent metaphysics, whether rationalist or analytic, is ruled out by Kant's and Hegel's thesis of singular, specifically *cognitive* reference: outside pure axiomatics, whatever content, meaning, or intension a concept, proposition, belief, or claim may have, it has no specifically *cognitive* significance unless and until it is referred ostensively by someone *to* some spatiotemporally localized, at least approximately delimited, particular(s); see Westphal 2014a, §3. Such ostensive designation or localization of relevant particular instances is required to “realize” concepts or principles, in the technical sense Tetens (1775) gave to this term, a sense and use Kant adopted from Tetens, and Hegel adopted from them both. This sense is typical of Hegel's use of “(*sich*) *realisieren*” in theoretical or cognitive contexts; cf. *Enc.* §445R, Westphal 2018a, §§2.3, 55.1, 63.3, 68, 112, 114.

A third feature of Kant's views to revisit is his restriction of teleological phenomena to those caused by or through some antecedent conscious representation (*CJ* §10; Teufel 2011); accordingly, teleological judgments can only be used heuristically to investigate living organisms (*CJ* §75). Kant's narrow concept of teleology is surprising in view of his own highly sophisticated account in the *Critique of Pure Reason* of sub-personal cognitive functions which must occur, indeed with sufficient reliability, if apperceptive self-consciousness, expressed by the analytically unitary "I think," is ever to be possible only upon an achieved synthetic unity of perceptual consciousness (*CPR* B131–39).<sup>3</sup> Despite Kant's restrictive concept of teleology, Hegel acknowledged Kant's reintroduction of teleological considerations to augment merely mechanical approaches to scientific inquiry and explanation (*Enc.* §360R; *VGPh* 3, MM 19:173, 177/*LHP-B* 2:240, 242), and yet stressed that goal-directed functions can be served by properly functioning systems (or sub-systems) which lack conscious intention (deVries 1991). In this regard, Aristotle's constitutive use of teleological functions – whether non-conscious or conscious – remained ahead of contemporaneous psychological theory (*Enc.* 1817, §204R; *VGPh* 3, MM 19:177), though constitutive use of teleological functions was, Hegel knew, well supported by contemporaneous research on comparative anatomy (Cuvier), anthropology (Blumenbach), systematic geo-history (Werner), and animal habitats (Cuvier, Hutton) (see Ferrini 2010a, 2010b, 2011).

One feature of contemporary functionalism in philosophy of mind is that functional organization is supposed to be neutral with regard to how it is realized by or in any material system. This holds too of Kant's functionalist cognitive architecture. This functionalist prospect of multiple reliability raises questions about whether or how *our* embodiment may realize any specific set of sufficiently reliable cognitive functions. Once Kant's transcendental idealism is set aside, one can well ask whether or how *our* human embodiment can or does "realize" or instantiate the quite specific and sophisticated set of coordinated cognitive functions Kant identifies as necessary and sufficient for the possibility of apperceptive experience by any being which must integrate sensations over time (Guyer 1989). This question is still more important in regard to Aristotle's view, emphatically endorsed by Hegel, that the human soul (Aristotle; cf. Sidiropoulou 2013) or spirit (Hegel) is inherently, necessarily embodied – a central point of Hegel's treatment of "Anthropology" (*Enc.* §§388–412).

<sup>3</sup> Kant's cognitive architecture is diagrammed at the end of Westphal 2019e.

These interpretive and reconstructive challenges are indeed worth surmounting because Kant's functionalist cognitive psychology not only identifies fundamental, integrated cognitive processes, but does so by highlighting and addressing issues about cognitive validity and justification fundamental also today regarding a host of "binding problems" in sensory, perceptual, and intellectual integration or (as Kant and Hegel call it) "synthesis" central to neurophysiology of perception, to the sciences of cognition (Roskies 1999), and to epistemology (Cleeremans 2003). The great relevance of Kant's philosophical psychology to the sciences of cognition has been recognized, but even today Kant's views provide resources yet to be harnessed (Brook 2016). Wilfrid Sellars rightly emphasized Kant's contributions to philosophical psychology in connection with epistemology; his student, Willem deVries (1988, 2016), has rightly emphasized how Sellars's reconstruction and use of Kant's contributions holds equally of Hegel's. This convergence should be expected: Hegel shares Sellars's aim to recover, redeploy, and augment Kant's account of cognitive judgment while dispensing with transcendental idealism (*Enc.* §448Z; Westphal 2010b, 2018a).

One key aim of Hegel's philosophical psychology is to show that, and how, an active account of human cognition is not only consistent with, but supports realism about the objects of empirical knowledge (Westphal 2016a). Proper cognitive functions and functioning are necessary for us to extract, recognize, sort, integrate, and use information about our surroundings from sensations, and to refer that information properly to those particulars which we sense, localize (*Enc.* §448Z), perceive, judge, understand, classify, investigate, and – with perseverance, care, and ingenuity – explain. Such issues about extracting, assessing, and integrating cognitively significant information about our surroundings are occluded by several common philosophical predilections, such as (1) mistaking sensations themselves for *objects* of our self-conscious awareness, whereas (typically) they are components of *acts* of sensory awareness of our surroundings, or of our bodily conditions (proprioception, kinesthesia); (2) appealing to a putative "common sense" by which we recognize any one object as what we sense via diverse proper sensibles: the white color, cubical corners, and savory taste of any grain of salt; (3) appealing to "innate" ideas or concepts; (4) mistaking issues of concept-possession for issues regarding their legitimate or justifiable cognitive use;<sup>4</sup> or (5) assuming empiricist presumptions that no cognitive activities at all are

<sup>4</sup> This latter is the Achilles' heel of so-called analytic transcendental arguments (Westphal 2018b).

necessary at any “basic” level of empirical knowledge (Westphal 2013). Kant recognized that the causal etiology of sensations cannot address epistemological issues about their information content or representational character, nor about how sensations are referred to whatever particulars we happen to sense (Melnick 1989). Kant criticized and rejected all five of those predilections, and argued cogently that there is altogether no human knowledge merely by aconceptual acquaintance, nor merely by description (s), however extensively detailed. Hegel recognized and capitalized on each of these key Kantian insights.

### 3 Hegel’s Post-Kantian Reconstruction of Aristotle’s *De anima*

When quoting above (Section 2) from Hegel’s lectures of 1825–26, I translated it more emphatically than Stewart and Brown, in accord with Hegel’s clear, emphatic, published statements about the singular merits of Aristotle’s *De anima*. In his published main text Hegel writes:

Aristotle’s books on the soul, along with his essays on particular aspects and states of the soul, are for this reason [viz., their systematic interconnectedness] still the most admirable, perhaps even the sole, work of speculative interest on this topic. The essential aim of a philosophy of spirit can only be to introduce the concept again into the knowledge of spirit, and so also to disclose once more the sense of those Aristotelian books. (*Enc.* §378)

Hegel’s task thus requires more than familiarity with Aristotle’s writings; it requires expertise – expertise Hegel achieved. This is attested by an authority with no stake in the merits of Hegel’s philosophy: the editor and translator of the critical bilingual (Greek–Italian) edition of Aristotle’s *De anima*, Giancarlo Movia (2001), who argues in detail that there is only one adequate and coherent interpretation of Aristotle’s *De anima*, that propounded by G. W. F. Hegel.<sup>5</sup>

Movia highlights three key points of Hegel’s interpretation of Aristotle’s *De anima*. One has been mentioned: the Aristotelean soul is necessarily

<sup>5</sup> I am most grateful to Cinzia Ferrini for bringing to my attention Movia’s (2001, 7–48) examination and endorsement of Hegel’s interpretation of Aristotle’s *De anima*. Movia quotes the comparable assessment of Hegel’s interpretation of Aristotle by Wieland (1992, 34–41), who observes: “Thus we have in Hegel’s interpretation of Aristotle a splendid example of how the speculative systematizer, insofar as he recognizes his own presuppositions, can consciously and most thoroughly prescind from his own speculative principles when interpreting historical [texts] – in this case, the demand for systematic unity. Indeed Hegel, who is regarded by many as the prototype of philosophical systematizers, comes closer to such an unsystematic thinker as Aristotle than does the typical historian, who commonly lacks reflexive consciousness of his own substantive, systematic presuppositions with which he approaches the text” (ibid., 40).

embodied, because the soul is the active form of the living body. For example, affect is both intelligent and corporeal – a point as important to Aristotle as to Hegel, and to Hegel's aim of reincorporating Kant's hylomorphism into nature, into human nature, and into our comprehension of our own soul and activities, rational, affective, or effective – i.e., our actions.

The second concerns this activity, and how alone it can be understood or, rather, comprehended (*begriffen*). As *activity*, the soul in its various forms, capacities, and achievements cannot be understood “mechanically” as an aggregate, assemblage, or series of distinct parts, stages, or sub-routines, however cleverly put together. Action and activity can be understood only by comprehending the inherent, necessary interrelations among the distinct aspects or factors involved in that activity, from beginning to end, through and by which it is effected, executed, or achieved (*VGPh* 2, *V* 8:80/MM 19:200/*LHP-B* 2:245). *This* is what Hegel means by “speculative” comprehension of “concretely” integrated aspects or factors. Distinguishing the aspects or factors constitutive of any activity is necessary, but these distinctions of reason must not be mistaken for real distinctions between particular substances, parts, or components, because they are distinctions of reason between “moments” – aspects or factors – of some *one* complex, integrated process, or activity. To mistake moments or aspects for parts or modules constitutes erroneous, obfuscating metaphysical reification (*Enc.* §445R; cf. Chiereghin 1989, §4). Material and efficient causation are necessary, but are not sufficient to identify, understand, explain, or otherwise comprehend the formal and final functionality of animate activities, including representation (semantic content, intension, classification), reason, and intelligence. (These points are vitally important to understanding human freedom and agency, according to both Kant and Hegel; Westphal 2014b, 2017b.)

A third concerns how, according to Aristotle and to Hegel, more basic activities of the soul – more basic forms of animation – provide the necessary basis, though not the sufficient conditions, for more sophisticated forms of animation: corporeal conservation (self-maintenance), nutrition, reproduction (of the species), sensibility, locomotion, affect, perception, and intellect (cf. Movia 2001, 20–21). Regarding natural phenomena and systems generally, and especially regarding the soul, agency, and intellect, Hegel espoused forms of “emergence” of complex structures and their behaviors; such emergentism is both non-reductive and also non-dualistic (non-vitalistic); it concerns kinds and levels of structural organization which enable distinctive forms of behavior or activity, synchronically and diachronically (Westphal 2008).



Hegel's approach thus accords, e.g., with systems theoretical biology and genetics (Noble 2016). Against reductive forms of naturalism Hegel argues that understanding the materials of living organisms – even those materials specific to organic chemistry – is important, but neither their stuffs nor their (merely) mechanical or chemical combinations, not even taken together, suffice to explain organic life causally: vital functions are systematic behaviors which must be specified at the level of the system (the organism, or its organs or organelles) and *its* functions and functioning. This is all the more important regarding perception and cognition, which involve forms of awareness and require representational content, not merely the occurrence of internal states. This distinction Descartes made in terms of the “objective” reality of ideas – whatever they represent, their content – in contrast to their “formal” reality as modes of a mind; likewise, Haack (1993, 74) contrasts belief-contents to belief-states. Causal relations do not suffice for the kinds of fine-grained distinctions (intension) required of intentional states, and especially so of conceptually structured thoughts or judgments (Dretske 1981, 30–39, 153–230). Contemporary dualists such as David Chalmers (2010) regard these points against reductive naturalism as sufficient to justify dualism about mental versus material substance. Hegel's counterpoint is also Kant's: the stuff of which “minds” are “made” tells us nothing about what characterizes mentality, nor what mindful beings *do*, nor *how* they do it – and especially little about how or why mindfulness and agency are embodied; “mind-stuff” is no more explanatory than the “dormitive virtue” of opium.

Descartes's distinction between the “formal” and “objective” reality of ideas helps mark the poles and points of departure in his treatment of “Anthropology” and “Phenomenology.” Hegel's examination of “Anthropology” commences by considering, in effect, the organic corporeality and functionality required for there to *be* any formal reality of what ultimately occur (exist) and function as contentful representations with objective reality within a living *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Hegel's examination of “Phenomenology” commences by considering, in effect, the nascent phenomenality required for there to *be* any objective reality or representational content of what ultimately occur (exist) and function as meaningful, potentially conscious and self-conscious (apperceptive) representings by an alert *Homo sapiens sapiens*. However, only at the further level of “Psychology,” specifically “Intelligence,” can or do these organically occurring yet contentful representings function *as* conscious or self-conscious representings *of* a person's surroundings or (*mutatis mutandis*) *of* her own corporeal circumstances (e.g., kinesthesia, affect), or (in “Practical Spirit”)

of what she intends to do and how she intends to achieve it: intelligence is required (à la Kant) to *refer* any of our representings *to* their (putative) objects, so that they can and do function *for us* as representing *those* objects.<sup>6</sup>

If “substance” is that which persists through changes of interconnected states (cf. *CPR* B232–33), then processes, activities, or actions which comprise any series of integrated stages or sub-routines count as “substantial.” The distinction between “substance” and “accident” is a distinction of reason, *not* an ontological priority; substances and their features (“accidents,” “properties”) are mutually interdependent ontologically (Westphal 1998). Animate activities, executed through time and space by a living organism, are indicative of what the organism itself *is*; as executed over time, its activities persist in and through changes of its component aspects, states, conditions, or behaviors. These animate activities, *as* persisting through time and changes of state, *as* regular and *as* constitutive of any living organism, constitute its substance, its being, its *essentialium* or *Wesen*. The “substance” of any animate being *is* its activities, what *it* does: its substance *is* its activity or agency. If its agency is intelligent – rational – its agency is both its subjectivity *and* its substance: both are equally co-constitutive (Movia 2001, 44; Hegel *PhG*, *GW* 9:18, 3–9, 427, 18–23).

In this regard, Hegel expressly credits Aristotle's *De anima* with genuine “speculative” comprehension, which Hegel expressly seeks to recover for our modern, post-Kantian era,<sup>7</sup> though Hegel seeks to improve on Aristotle by developing a much more comprehensively integrated account of our human form of rational-affective animation (cf. Chiereghin 1989, §§2, 3; Movia 2001, 23). Sensations or affects may be occasioned in us by various causes, but our sensitivity or “receptivity” to sensations or affects is not merely passive; there is also an “active” or spontaneous aspect to sensations or affects pertaining to exactly *how* our sensory-affective receptivity responds to whatever stimuli; this, too, Hegel highlights in Aristotle's psychology (Movia 2001, 30; cf. Hegel *VGPh* 2, *V* 8:84–85/*LHP-B* 2:249).

<sup>6</sup> This analytical structure underscores how very different Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* “Phenomenology of Spirit” (*Enc.* §§413–39) is from his 1807 book bearing nominally the same title, though with an entirely different method, agenda, and basis (cf. Westphal 2019b, 2019c).

<sup>7</sup> See *De an.* 1.1.402a7ff., 402b16ff.; Hegel *VGPh* 2, *MM* 19:203–5, 212, 219/*LHP-B* 2:246, 247, 251. On Hegel's “Anthropology,” its Aristotelian roots, and how it undergirds Hegel's “Phenomenology” – and thus in turn also his “Psychology” and so his account of “Intelligence” – see de Laurentiis 2019.

#### 4 Theoretical Intelligence

Hegel's explicit examination of our theoretical intelligence is the first of two main parts of the third division of his encyclopedic philosophy of subjective spirit (*Enc.* §§445–68), titled "Psychology" (*Enc.* §§440–81).<sup>8</sup> This division heading appears peculiar, indeed redundant, as the first division of subjective spirit examines "Anthropology" or, he expressly states there, "the Soul" (*Enc.* §§388–412). Likewise, the designation "Theoretical Spirit (Intelligence)" appears peculiar if not redundant because it follows a "Phenomenology of Spirit" (*Enc.* §§413–38), which expressly examines both consciousness as such, self-consciousness, mutual recognition (*Enc.* §§430–35), and universal self-consciousness, and concludes with a section on "Reason" (*Enc.* §438). Another apparent peculiarity is that Hegel aligns Kant's Critical philosophy with "phenomenology" (*Enc.* §415R), thus apparently denying that Kant's epistemology examines our "theoretical intelligence," but instead only our "consciousness" (*Enc.* §415R) or "perception" (*Enc.* §420R)! This seems hardly ameliorated by Hegel crediting Kant's philosophy with drawing more attention to psychology (*Enc.* §445R). Hegel reiterated and elaborated these contentions in his Berlin lectures on his encyclopedic phenomenology of spirit (summer 1825).<sup>9</sup>

Hegel neither rejects epistemology nor denies that we as individuals know things in our surroundings, whether in everyday life or using various technical or scientific procedures. Quite the contrary, Hegel argues very ably for epistemological realism, including scientific realism about causal laws of nature and natural kinds, and against all forms of skepticism – including that suggested by Kant's transcendental idealist distinction between spatiotemporal appearances to us and whatever unknowable noumena may ground such appearances. These epistemological issues about whether we can and do know the spatiotemporal world of nature Hegel addressed in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*; how and what we know in knowing the natural world are central topics in Hegel's *Science of Logic* and *Philosophy of Nature*. Constitutive features and aspects of our

<sup>8</sup> On Hegel's treatment of other aspects of "spirit" in his *Encyclopaedia*, see the contributions on these topics to this volume; also see deVries 1988, 2013; Bourgeois 2001; Quante 2011; Soares 2011; Stern 2013; Herrmann-Sinai and Ziglioli 2016; and Oehl and Kok 2018; on Hegel's reexamination of Aristotle's *De anima*, see Chiereghin 1989; Dangel 2013. These selected suggestions provide further references.

<sup>9</sup> These lectures are translated by Petry (*Enc.* 3P, 3:271–357); see his index for Hegel's comments on Kant.

embodied cognitive capacities are examined in “Anthropology”; our exercise of embodied cognitive capacities in experiencing our surroundings is examined in Hegel’s encyclopedic “Phenomenology of Spirit.”<sup>10</sup>

In “Psychology,” and especially in theoretical “Intelligence,” Hegel develops what might be called a philosophy of knowledge, to examine what is achieved in and through human knowledge of the world in which we live, knowledge which we develop by using the forms of judgment, inference, and principles of explanation examined in the *Logic* when exercising our embodied cognitive capacities (per “Anthropology,” *Enc.* §§388–412) through conscious, commonsense and also explanatory inquiries structured by our conscious and self-conscious capacities outlined in “Phenomenology of Spirit” (*Enc.* §§413–39). What, then, remains to be examined? And why does it belong to the study of “subjective spirit”? The first part of Hegel’s Psychology, “Intelligence” (*Enc.* §§440–68), examines the subjective aspect of “spirit as such”<sup>11</sup> in its embodied form as human sapience.

Hegel’s examination of our theoretical intelligence reexamines a host of topics examined in the two prior parts (just mentioned), though from a distinctive, more comprehensive, and much more integrated perspective. In “Psychology” spirit takes the implicit, principled result of “Phenomenology,” that intersubjective reason can and does know our public, natural world (*Enc.* §§438, 439), and makes this result and its significance explicit (*Enc.* §443). The thematic links between, and distinctive agendas of, each of Hegel’s three main parts of “Psychology” are manifold; they cannot be detailed here, though many are indicated by Hegel’s detailed contents and taxonomy (see below, Section 8). In fact, Hegel announces his aims regarding “Intelligence” very directly, but how he describes his aims is so unexpected and heterodox they are difficult to comprehend. Accordingly, the next two sections (Sections 5 and 6) aim to orient the reader within Hegel’s surprising reintegration of human sentience into nature via our capacity to know and comprehend nature, and our achievements in actually comprehending nature through manifold forms of empirical inquiry, including the natural sciences. I then (in Section 7) outline how Hegel outlines these accomplishments in his account of Theoretical Intelligence (*Enc.* §§440–68).

<sup>10</sup> Here I omit human action and our knowledge of society and history to simplify presentation in accord with the remit of this chapter. Despite the shared title, Hegel’s encyclopaedic “Phenomenology of Spirit” is an altogether different work, with different scope, aims, issues, methods, and role, to his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*; see Westphal 2019e.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Enc.* §§439, 440Z, 446Z; *SL* II, *GW* 12:178, 12–15, 198, 122–24, 236, 8–33.

## 5 Nature, Knowledge, and Alienation?

The rise of quantified, exact physical sciences examining imperceptible yet explanatory features of matter appeared to dislodge human sentience from nature; “secondary” sensory qualities are only appearances to us of “primary,” entirely quantifiable, sub-observable features of matter, or of material structures. When the human body, too, was reconceived as, in principle, nothing but a sophisticated mechanism, Aristotelian and medieval views of perception as accomplished by an embodied, living soul were rejected. Sensory qualities were reascribed to the immaterial mind, thus spawning the mind–body problem (Matson 1966; King 2007).<sup>12</sup> Once dislodged from a purely mechanistic nature, it became difficult to regard (merely) physical nature as a natural home for sentient human beings; even the thought of divine providence gave way to a distant deist article of sheer faith, unsupported (because unsupportable) by natural theology. Though not a new idea, regarding the “real” features of physical objects as the unsensed causes of sensory experience has been an all-too-fertile source of confusion and skepticism from Protagoras and Democritus, through Sextus Empiricus, down to Eddington’s infamous “two tables” (one commonsense perceptible table; one scientific table of atomic structure), Putnam’s “internal realism,” and van Fraassen’s “Constructive Empiricism” (Westphal 1997, xxiii–xxvi; 2019b).

There is irony if not paradox in this apparent development, as Hegel recognized: if we can know enough about nature to develop exact quantitative natural sciences, then whatever features, aspects, or processes within nature we thus know scientifically are, indeed, comprehensible to the human mind! Rather than appealing to transcendent, divine providential coordination, as did Descartes, Malbranche, and other occasionalists,<sup>13</sup> Hegel radically reconceived the early Greek notion of *noûs* governing the universe, now as scientifically precise structure: the laws of nature, classifications of natural kinds, and systematic interdependencies of and within natural systems and their members, certainly within our own solar system and our terrestrial biosphere and its geological, geographical, and also astronomical bases (temperate seasons). Though acknowledging that

<sup>12</sup> Descartes’s strict dualism is restricted to the *Meditations*; he did not leave mind and body in the infallibilist clutches of the *mauvais genie* (cf. Ferrini 2015), where it has been left ever since by Cartesians.

<sup>13</sup> As Hegel knew: *Enc.* §389Z; cf. *VGPb* 3, V 9:97–98, 114/*LHP-B* 3:143–45, 167.

history is a slaughter bench (*VGesch.*, Einl., MM 12:35; *VPhG* 1:39/*LHP-H* 90), Hegel thought he could nevertheless descry significant progress in freedom, justice, reason, reasoning, and conceptually articulate, exacting knowledge, one result of which is that our ever-expanding and improving knowledge of nature, society, and history affords spirit's self-knowledge: the world-whole, as a whole to which *we* belong, achieves its own self-knowledge in and through our knowledge of it. *This* is the central theme of Hegel's treatment of "Psychology": human sentience, cognition, and empirical knowledge, including natural-scientific, cultural, and historical knowledge, *are* the "subjective" and "psychological" aspects of spirit *as such* (§446Z; cf. above, note 10). Our modern sciences of nature, culture, society, and history thus corroborate, while radically reconfiguring, the Ancient Greek view that *noûs* structures and governs the world, and that our human share in *noûs* – individually and collectively – enables us to comprehend much of this fundamental natural and historical structure. The modern sense of our human, especially cognitive alienation from mechanistic nature is illusory, in large part because mechanism alone disregards the systematic interconnections and functioning of natural, social, and historical structures, and hampers our comprehension of them, unless and until we properly, comprehensively reintegrate the analytical factors we identify, individuate, and precisely specify.

Hegel's systematic holism allows for contingency (Burbidge 2007) and highlights the mutual interdependence of individuals and the kinds, structures, communities, or populations which they instantiate or to which they belong; neither term is more basic than the other: they are mutually interdependent for their existence and their characteristics (Westphal 1989, 140–45; 2003, §§32–36); Hegel's monism is not a "block universe" (cf. Horstmann 1984). Hegel was the first to identify a key conflation running through Occidental ontology between two distinct senses of "internal" or "intrinsic" regarding properties or features. In one sense, a property or feature is "internal" or "intrinsic" to an individual if it constitutive of it; in another sense a property or feature is "internal" or "intrinsic" to an individual if it is solely contained within it. If these two conceptions are conflated, atomistic ontologies of mutually independent basic particulars follow inevitably, thwarting any comprehension of causal interaction. This conflation pervades Occidental philosophy from Aristotle through Kant until at least 1941. Hegel was the first to disambiguate it, and did so to comprehend how causal interactions are (partly) constitutive of individuals: their generation, behavior, interactions, transformations, and (in most cases) eventual disintegration (Westphal 2015).

## 6 Hegel's Systematic Presentism

Hegel aims to analyze and defend of the powers of human cognition, not by reducing our objects of knowledge to sets of subjective (or intersubjective) states, but by arguing that our conceptions can be adequate to comprehend the world itself, or at least many of its most significant aspects. Knowledge and the world known differ in form: knowledge is apperceptive, perceptive, and comprehending; the world is neither perceptive nor apperceptive – except insofar as *we* apperceptively comprehend the world to which we belong, in which we live and act, and which we investigate, study, explain, understand, and with diligence comprehend. Hegel's "idealism" is an ontological thesis, a moderate holism concerning the interdependence of everything there is: individuals, systems, constitutive features, natural kinds, causal laws, human activities, and their histories and tendencies.

Hegel's ontology is a systematic ontological holism of constitutive interdependencies. On the one hand, particular individuals have their causal and constitutive grounds only in aspects of the whole world-system, insofar as their characteristics obtain only in and through contrast with opposed characteristics of other particulars *and* insofar as they are generated, sustained, altered, and corrupted through their causal interaction with other particulars. The concept (*der Begriff*), as the principle of the constitution of characteristics (including natural kinds) through contrast, *and* as the causal laws of nature which structure individuals, their features, and their behavior, obtains only in and as the interconnection of, *and* the interactions between, individuals and their features within the world. According to Hegel, natural kinds and causal laws of nature only exist insofar as they are instantiated by extant or occurrent individuals, which or whom they (partially) constitute (cf. *Enc.* §§453R, 456Z). Causal laws structure relations between kinds of cause and their kinds of effect; according to Hegel, such causal structures *are* determinate, specific concepts (*SL* II, *GW* 12:38, 22–39; cf. *SL* I, *GW* 21:396–409, *Enc.* §§309R, 408Z, 456Z, 467Z). On Hegel's view, "the idea" and "spirit" are to be understood as further (cognitive, historical, and normative) specifications of this one basic ontological structure. Our knowledge of the world-system adds only the aspect of "being for itself" to this system (*Enc.* §236Z). Since we are part of the world-system, when we achieve knowledge of the world, the world-system achieves (some) self-knowledge through us. In this way our knowledge of the world-system does help to realize the "true nature" of things, because on Hegel's view it is part of the nature of the world that its



nature becomes known; however, our knowing the natural world does not generate its content nor “impose” its structure. (Here I restrict this to the “natural” world because artefacts are socially reconfigured natural stuffs, according to Hegel, and so depend partly on natural properties of their materials and partly on social practices for their characteristics.) Fundamental structures of the natural world, which Hegel calls “objective thoughts” (*Enc.* §§23R, 24 & R & Z, 25), finally enter our heads through our empirical researches, and then by our coming to know that the doctrines set out in Hegel's *Logic* are true (*Enc.* §19R, cf. §22Z; *SL I*, *GW* 21:13, 6–14, 34, 45, 11–46, 15), via extensive and intensive philosophical reconsideration of the natural, social, and historical sciences (cf. *SL I*, 21:42, 16–27, 43, 5–24, *SL II*, 12:220, 5–222, 33, 227, 13–228, 15).

The kinds of interdependence between natural kinds, causal laws, their respective particular instances, and the interactions among the particulars so structured central to Hegel's ontology stand out in relief if considered as a form of “presentism” about time, a consideration suggested by Hegel's remarks about time and *der Begriff* (concept) both in the Preface to the 1807 *Phenomenology* and near its conclusion that “Time is the concept itself that is there.”<sup>14</sup> Hegel's comment contrasts markedly to Plato's claim that time is “a moving *image of eternity*” (*Timaeus* 37; emphasis added), and to contemporary models of individual particulars as four-dimensional “space-time worms”: such models are *static* images of interconnected temporal processes! As always, we must take care with models – as with maps – about which features of the model represent actual features of whatever domain is so modeled, and which features of the model are mere artefacts of the kind of modeling used.

Consider Hegel's remark on time (just quoted) in connection with H. S. Harris's subtle reflections on time and recollection (Harris 1997, 2:461, 469, 533–38, 549–50, 653, 706 n. 57, 710, 719, 722, 729–37, 740, 745). The future is not yet, the past no longer is; there is only the present. Some particulars or configurations presently are older than others; presently various particulars or configurations change in various ways at various rates. To know something *as* temporally extended requires constructing it *as* temporally extended by reconstructing its historical phases, its past states and circumstances, and its interactions. If substance persists through time, then sapient memory is a crucial element through which substance

<sup>14</sup> “Die Zeit ist der Begriff selbst, der *da ist*” (*PhG*, *GW* 9:429, 7); “so ist [die Zeit] der daseyende Begriff selbst” (*PhG*, *GW* 9:34, 18–21). On presentism, see Crisp 2003.



exists historically. This is one way in which Hegel conceives substance also as subject (*PhG*, *GW* 9: 427.20–27, 429.20–432.26). The world-whole is not simply there for us to pluck; there *is* only the present, though presently there are old objects, phenomena, materials, configurations, structures, and systems which persist and continue to function, develop, transform, or deteriorate into the future. Only through *our* investigation, reconstruction, analysis, assessment, documentation, knowledge, and understanding can the world-whole expressly exist *as* the world-whole and *as* spirit in and through historical and cosmological time (cf. Rudwick 2005); this is one reason for the systematic centrality within Hegel's philosophy of philosophical history (Motroshilova 2019).

Instead of a (so to speak) four-dimensional solid or block universe, if all that there is *is* only presently, *as* it is presently, we obtain a remarkable result: whatever may be the categorial and causal structure of worldly kinds of particular individuals, systems, and processes, whatever are their constitutive causal characteristics, whatever are the causal laws of nature, *and* whatever are the causal processes affecting, producing, preserving, altering, transforming, or disintegrating particular individuals, systems, or processes – *all* this structure, all these processes, and all particular individuals and systems exist only *now*, in the ongoing causal, structural, and behavioral transitions “between” (so to speak) past and future. Everything is directly or indirectly interrelated – integrated – with everything else; everything is as it is, changes as it does, and effects or achieves whatever it does, *presently* within the entirety of the world-whole. Only through us and our historical, empirical, and natural-scientific investigations, *and* our documentation, recollection, and comprehension of what is happening *now*, and how current states and features of the universe came to be what they are through previous states and features of the universe, does the universe as a whole have any sense of its own past, its own contents, its own structures, and its own results, achievements, and tendencies.

If this combination of (moderate) causal holism plus radical presentism about existence *now* is tenable, this ontological holism is tantamount to a version of ontological emanationism, not as developed by various forms of theism (Hegel rejected *transcendent* theism along with transcendent metaphysics), though perhaps as envisaged by some sages often dismissed as “mystics” – though these sages had the grace to accept the divine capacity to distinguish justice from injustice, virtue from negligence or vice, and had the wisdom and humility not to speak where words can only fail us. Ontological emanationism is a marvelous and magnificent view. I doubt it may be proven; as a view of the totality of the universe, it

precludes our realizing this thought by ostensibly indicating relevant instances. Yet what is most important about this majestic vision may not require proof; such debate would affect neither our moral obligations or aspirations, nor our inquiries or knowledge, at all – though it may affect our own humility and our responsiveness to holding ourselves responsible to moral requirement. (In this I agree with di Giovanni (2009, 2018) in rejecting the familiar left- and the right-wing views of Hegel's philosophy of religion.) Hegel's accomplishment is to show that, and how, this vision is detailed and substantiated in and through our comprehensive, exacting investigations of nature, society, culture, and history (cf. *Enc.* §§441Z, 443) – despite varieties of partisan self-seeking which continue historical injustices or even slaughter.

Hegel appears quite deliberately to develop his moderate ontological holism so as to reconcile it with the integral unity prominent in emanationist metaphysics, though with a very different account of natural kinds, causal laws, and the plethora of interrelations, direct and indirect, characteristic of each and every aspect, member, component, or structure of – or, rather, within – the world-whole, so as not to invoke what Geoff Bowe (2004) elucidates as “the Platonic Metaphysical Hierarchy,” which Plotinus defends against Aristotle, and yet to resolve the question and comprehend the relations between ultimate unity and manifest specifics which dogged the Platonic tradition, and stymied Schelling's absolute idealism. Citing *Enneads* (5:1, 6), Hegel notes the issues about unity and plurality central to Plotinus and to debates about his emanationist monism (*VGPh*, MM 19:448, cf. *V* 8:180–81/*LHP-B* 2:335–36), and how they thwart Schelling's metaphysics (*VGPh* 3, MM 20:434–35/*LHP-H* 3:525–26, cf. *V* 9:181–82/*LHP-B* 3:261–62); Hegel claims his integrated account of force, laws of nature, causal explanation, natural structure, and understanding solves these problems (*PhG*, *GW* 9:99.30–100.28/*PS* 162). Comprehending the constitutive integrity of opposed, complementary aspects or members is the very point of “speculative” thought, according to Hegel (*WL* I, *GW* 11:27.13–22).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For relevant, lucid discussion of Plotinus, see Verra (1993) and Bowe (2004). However ambitious Hegel's views may be in this regard, his views on identity, thing/property relations, causal explanation, and philosophy of nature are sophisticated and sound; see Westphal (1998, 2008, 2015) and Ferrini (2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011). Cinzia Ferrini kindly brought to my attention Verra (1993).

## 7 Theoretical Intelligence, Subjective Spirit, and the “Psychology” of Spirit as Such

Hegel’s remarks on *Enc.* §446 about feeling indicate the relations between his examination of anthropology, phenomenology, and psychology; not only that they each consider (e.g.), feeling, they do so in distinctive, mutually complementary connections (*Beziehung*; cf. Chiereghin 1989, §4). Anthropology examines feelings as singular bodily occurrences, distributive states of animal awareness, developing these up to the level of an animal’s feeling of its singular self *feeling* some plurality of sensations. However, regarding such sensory states *as* one’s own feelings requires consciousness, which takes these sensory states simply to *be* objects, *as* whatever they feel like or appear to be, though without taking them to be sensations *of* its own embodiment, nor *of* its surroundings (*Enc.* §446Z). Consciousness, as examined in Hegel’s encyclopedic “Phenomenology of Spirit,” is initially merely phenomenal and egocentric. This phenomenal egocentrism Hegel examines so as to develop and exhibit its situatedness in context *as* one among a plurality of self-conscious rational beings, who in principle are able to recognize themselves, one another, and various features of their public, worldly surroundings (*Enc.* §§438–39). In principle, this genuine, truthful, also intersubjective knowledge introduces “spirit” (*Geist*). Only as intelligent spirit do we *Homo sapiens sapiens* become actually sapient, Hegel contends, insofar as conceptually structured intelligent judgments are required to integrate our awareness of bodily sensations with those conditions, internal or external, *of which* they are sensations. Intelligence is required to *refer* sensations to their sources, whether internal or external; this is the distinction between mere sensory feelings and empirical *intuitions*, which are directed to *their* sources *as* objects (*Enc.* §§445–50). This view accords entirely with Kant’s. Hegel, however, restricts the term “representation” (*Vorstellung*) to those sensory intuitions which are *used* by someone *as* referred to, and *as* informative *about* some feature(s) of her or his surroundings, or her or his own bodily states (*Enc.* §§451–64). To develop such informative sensory representations into conceptually articulate thoughts, *as* classifying particulars or their features, and so *ascribing* what one thinks *to* (putative) relevant particulars or their features, requires further cognitive-psychological achievements, involving implicit retention and recall (*Erinnerung*; *Enc.* §§452–54), imagination (*Enc.* §§455–60), and explicit memory under one’s intelligent command (*Gedächtnis*; *Enc.* §§461–65). Hegel’s treatment of these capacities closely parallels Kant’s account of three-fold

perceptual synthesis (CPR A98–105; B129–35, 163–65). These intellectual capacities, functions, and achievements are all required to form any *thought* about any characteristics, features, or particulars, and to *refer* one's thought *to* putatively relevant particulars (or their features) one has localized spatially and temporally, by at least approximately delimiting the spatiotemporal region they occupy. This reflects Hegel's agreement with Kant's Thesis of Singular Cognitive Reference, and their both having adopted Tetens's sense of "*realisieren*" in connection with realizing concepts, classifications, principles, or thoughts (see above, note 2). If such "realized" thoughts are sufficiently accurate and justified, they constitute *knowledge* of those instances, of those particulars which exhibit those (attributed) features within the spatiotemporal region one specifies when designating (ostending) them and ascribing features to them. In principle, we can achieve *true* thoughts, which are *our* intellectual achievements, which are universal, *and* which are actually instantiated by those particulars we have identified and localized (*Enc.* §§445Z (γ), 448Z, 449 & Z, 465), by *judging* what things are and by *inferring* their proper classification(s), explanation(s), relation(s), and systematic role(s), if any (*Enc.* §467, cf. §443; cf. Westphal 2016a; Redding 2018). In this way, human cognition appropriates and reconstructs the character, structure, causes, history, and tendencies of spatiotemporal worldly particulars, events, structures, and processes (*Enc.* §§445Z, 468). In this regard, we are not harnessed to a cognitively opaque "other" confronting us as an implacable, incomprehensible, natural profusion of powers. We are free to achieve our cognitive aims through exacting studies of nature, and thus free to find intelligibility in nature which reflects our own intelligent cognitive inquiries, discoveries, explanations, understanding, and comprehension. Insofar as we *Homo sapiens sapiens* are natural (as well as social and historical) beings, through our knowledge of nature, society, and history, the world achieves self-knowledge *as spirit* (*Enc.* §§443, 445 & Z).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Although Hegel may not have known this to be the Stoic view of *oikeiōsis*, his view accords exactly with it, while providing a positive political theory the Stoics neglected in their cosmopolitan concern for all others. Distinctive of Stoic *oikeiōsis* is that it charts an individual's nascent moral development from non-moral concern with natural advantages to moral concern with virtue, both one's own and others'; the Stoic doctrine of *oikeiōsis* rejects the common view – later widely though erroneously ascribed to them – that we begin as primitive hedonistic egoists and must be taught to develop or adopt other-regarding concerns (Annas 1993, 148, 262–90, 302–7, 317–20, 415–18, 432). Hegel admired Stoic virtue, but recognized that it requires "a harmony of rational willing with external reality" (VGPh 2, V 8:114/LHP-B 2:276). Stoic *oikeiōsis* designates becoming *properly* familiar with oneself and with others; it is a direct precursor to Hegel's view of our finding ourselves at home with ourselves, with others, as citizens within a legitimate republic (Westphal 2017c, 2017d; cf. Hardimon 1994) and with our natural, social, and historical world. Annas (1993) traces

This is to summarize and integrate key factors in Hegel's analysis of Intelligence, to indicate how richly he differentiates its manifold corporeal and phenomenal preconditions which alone enable our intelligent psychological capacities, abilities, and achievements, in thought, knowledge, and action. Hegel's Psychology now "reconsiders the capacities or universal forms of activity of *spirit as such*," including intuition, representation, recollection, desire, etc., while disregarding their empirical content, whether sensory, perceptual, or conative (§440R). One reason Hegel does so is to underscore how spirit is self-sufficient or autonomous, insofar as it "proceeds from its own being and relates itself to its own determinations" (*Enc.* §440). Hegel implies that all the preparations for this advent of spirit have been made (in Anthropology and Phenomenology), so that what remains is "only to realize this concept of its freedom" (*ibid.*, §440R). To do so, spirit "must only sublimate the *form* of immediacy with which it begins again," to appropriate or claim for its own "the various and manifold contents of its sensations, sensory intuitions, representations by converting these into thoughts" (*ibid.*). Hegel's lecture remarks make plain that these are not any random thoughts, but spirit's thoughts by which it comprehends and thus appropriates cognitively any and every feature of its surroundings or itself which it properly considers. In this way, spirit can be certain of itself in knowing its surroundings, and thus knowing its surroundings to be comprehensible. *This* unity of subjectivity and objectivity, comprehended conceptually and empirically, *is* reason. This is, Hegel is recorded as saying, "knowing [*Wissen*] that its object is concept and that the concept is objective" (*Enc.* §§440Z, 441). This is Hegel's aim, noted above (in Section 5), to overcome and resolve our alienation from the world apparently caused and at least occasioned by the development of mechanistic sciences of nature. Hegel further stresses that achieving this conceptual comprehension of the identity of the content of thought and the structure or features of the world (that to which true thoughts properly correspond, and which they articulate and comprehend), thus liberating spirit from the appearance of an incomprehensibly alien world confronting it, also marks the integration of the first two stages of Subjective Spirit, namely, Anthropology and Phenomenology, or put otherwise of "soul"

Stoic *oikeiōsis* to Arius Didymus, who is not mentioned by Hegel, nor by the most comprehensive source Hegel had, Buhle (1796–1804). The fateful loss of the dual foci on oneself and on others of Stoic *oikeiōsis* in modern moral philosophy up to Kant is examined concisely by Edwards (2018, 203–47, 268–71). The dual focus of Stoic *oikeiōsis* suits much better Hegel's reasons for agreeing with Aristotle about how and why we are *zōōn politikon* (Westphal 2019a).

and "consciousness" (ibid., §440z). Free spirit constitutively requires actual (extant) consciousness, which in turn constitutively requires actual, functioning, living ensoulment. Spirit's self-knowledge requires comprehending these, its constitutive preconditions.

Hegel directly indicates the main regard in which the soul, consciousness, or spirit counts as finite or infinite (*Enc.* §441). To consider his indications properly requires avoiding arithmetical connotations of these terms, which are nearly unavoidable in English. Hegel's contrast concerns, better to say, what is or is not bounded, limited, or conditioned by something else. This last term, "conditioned," is crucial to Hegel's distinction between finite and infinite, according to which something is finite if it is constitutively dependent on, and thus limited or bounded by, something other than itself. Conversely, something is infinite if it integrates its constitutive conditions within itself. Accordingly, the soul is finite if it is determined immediately (asymmetrically) by nature. Consciousness is finite insofar as it merely has an object, without (yet) comprehending this object. Spirit is finite insofar as it does not comprehend its reason "in and for itself"; such reason "in and for itself" is the rational structure of the world – its natural kinds, laws of nature, specific structures, their causal history and tendencies – insofar as all this worldly structure is comprehended rationally by reason (*Enc.* §441). This is, as mentioned above (in Section 5), Hegel's claim (in effect) to recover the Ancient Greek view of *noûs* structuring the world, and our human share in *noûs* comprehending that cosmic *noûs*, though this Ancient supposition can only be recovered by fully manifesting the rationality involved in knowing (*Wissen*) the rational structures instantiated in and by the world, and through this also knowing what reason is, as structure and as actively comprehending that structure (*Enc.* §§441, 442). Hegel's examination of "intelligence" within his Psychology expressly aims to reconsider each of the previously identified anthropological and phenomenological aspects, components, or functions *as* these sub-serve integrated functions which enable spirit to comprehend reason and its own rational activities and achievements, by which it comprehensively reconstructs the world it knows, and does so freely, insofar as the world it knows is not a recalcitrant, foreign other (*Enc.* §442).

Hegel's published lecture outline on "intelligence" is as subtly articulated as it is compressed; his *Encyclopaedia* is expressly a compendium. Here only some key points may be indicated briefly. One central point is that the developmental stages, aspects, and achievements Hegel examines are not genetic developments from (comparatively) raw ingredients to

## §8 The Three Phases of Hegel's *Encyclopaedia* of Subjective Spirit

<b>A. ANTHROPOLOGY. The Soul</b>			
<b>A. The natural soul</b>			
a) Natural qualities			
1) Natural soul	§388		§440
2) Races & regional character	§391		§445
3) The individual subject	§392		§446
i) Natural [endowment]			§448
ii) Temperament	§393		§449
iii) Character	§395		§451
§396			§452
b) Natural changes			
1) The stages of life			§453
i) Child			§454
ii) Adult			§455
iii) Elderly			§456
2) Sexual relationship	§397		§457
3) Waking & sleeping	§398		
γ) Sensation	§399		§458
1) The senses	§401		§459
i) Sight & hearing			§461
ii) Smell & taste			
iii) Feeling			§462
2) Sensing			§463
3) Embodiment			§465
<b>B. The feeling soul</b>			§467
a) The feeling soul in its immediacy			
1) Passive subjectivity	§403		
i) Dreaming	§405		
ii) The child in mother's womb	§406a		
The individual & its genius	(§405z)		
2) [Hypnotic] somnambulism			
i) Appearances	§406z		
(1) Meal- & water-divining			
(2) Cataplexy & sleep-walking			
(3) [Telepathy]			
<b>B. PHENOMENOLOGY of SPIRIT: Consciousness</b>			
As awareness of (inner & outer) states			
As appearance of spirit		§413	
As formal self-identity		§414	
As certainty, without truth		§415	
As consciousness as such		§416	
a) Sensuous consciousness		§418	
α) Perception	§420		
β) Understanding	§422		
γ) Self-consciousness	§424		
α) Desire	§426		
1) Drive			
2) Activity	§427		
3) Satisfaction	§428		
γ) Recognitive self-consciousness	§430		
1) Life & death struggle	§431		
2) Mastery & Servitude	§433		
3) Shared needs & satisfaction	§434		
γ) Universal self-consciousness	§436		
c. Reason	§438		
As concept of spirit		(§417)	
As identity of subjectivity & objectivity of the concept as known in its uni-versality & its extant object (world).			
As self-consciously knowing & known truth		§438	
reason is spirit.		§439	
<b>C. PSYCHOLOGY. Spirit</b>			
<b>A. Theoretical spirit (Intelligence)</b>			
a) Intuition			
1) Feeling			
2) Attention			
3) Intuition			
β) Presentation			
1) Recollection			
i) Image			
ii) Unconsciously preserved image			
iii) Recollection proper			
2) Imagination			
i) Reproductive			
ii) Associative			
iii) Phantasy			
(1) Symbolic			
(2) The sign			
(3) Language			
3) Memory			
i) Verbal			
ii) Reproductive			
iii) Mechanical			
γ) Thought			
1) Understanding			
2) Judgment			
3) Inference			
<b>B. Practical spirit</b>			
a) Practical feeling			
β) Impulses & willfulness			
1) Passion			
2) Interest			
3) Choice ( <i>Wille</i> )			
γ) Happiness			
<b>c. Free spirit</b>			

ii) Content	
(1) Unconscious recollection	
(2) [Telepathy]	
(3) Inner visions	
(4) Outer visions	
(5) Immediate sympathy	
iii) Inducing somnambulism	
(1) Disease	
(2) Ways & means	
(3) Effects	
(4) The [hypnotist]	
(5) Healing	
β) Self-awareness	§407
1) Particular feelings	
2) Derangement	§408
i) Imbecility, absent-mindedness, desip- ence	
ii) Folly	
iii) Insanity	
iv) Healing of insanity	
γ) Habit	§409
1) Indifference to sensation	
2) Moderated satisfaction	
3) Skill, facility	
c. The actual soul	§411
α) Involuntary embodiment	
β) Voluntary embodiment	
1) Composure, comportment	
2) Gesture	
3) Physiognomy	
γ) The 'I' of consciousness	§412

The object of intelligence is:  
1<sup>st</sup> An immediate object (*Objekt*);  
2<sup>nd</sup> Recollected, intro-reflected stuff (*Stoff*, feelings);  
3<sup>rd</sup> An object (*Gegenstand*) which is equally both subjective and objective.

Accordingly, three stages of theoretical spirit:  
α) Intuition of a single object (*Objekt*);  
β) Representation of its universality (kind, features);  
γ) Concretely universal comprehending the object (*Gegenstand*) as specifying the existence of what is thought of it.

Intuition, three sub-stages:  
1. Sensation, feelings  
2. Discriminating attention, active recollection;  
3. Intuition positing the object (*Objekt*) as inherently self-external.

Representation, three sub-stages:  
1. Recollection;  
2. Imagination;  
3. Memory.

Thinking, three stages of content:  
1. Understanding;  
2. Judgment;  
3. Reason.

Notes

The topical order of Hegel's philosophical *Encyclopaedia*:

- I Logic.
- II Philosophy of Nature.
- III Philosophy of Subjective Spirit.
- IV Objective Spirit; *Philosophical Outlines of Justice* (*Recht*).
- V Absolute Spirit.

This chart largely follows Perry's (1978) tables of contents, with some revisions and omissions of sub-headings not clearly stated by Hegel in his published text or noted by lecture transcripts. Some few modern terms are used so that this chart may be read without consulting the original.

— K.R. Westphal



(comparatively) more sophisticated functions. To the contrary, Hegel aims to show that the many specific factors and functions identified in Anthropology and in Phenomenology must all be comprehended from the standpoint of fully developed and functioning spirit, to the capacities and functioning of which they each contribute (Ziche 1994). Even our most routine habits are intelligent behaviors, insofar as they are first developed by purposive, goal-directed activities, refined as need be into practiced skills, and repeated insofar as they are effective and needed (*Enc.* §410R). Hume's attempt to reduce any and all non-deductive reasoning to merely customary habits of associated "ideas" fails utterly because it cannot account for our capacity to specify which particulars we identify by localizing them on any occasion, nor can it account for our use of meaningful words, in contrast to mere vocables (Westphal 2013). Only by intelligence, not merely by consciousness, can or do we recognize whatever we intuit outside ourselves in our surroundings, *as* the particular object, event, person, or structure it is, where and when we perceive (or also measure) it (*Enc.* §§450, 451). Only by intelligence can or do we use a sign (*Zeichen*) meaningfully to designate some particular (*Enc.* §§383, 451Z, 457–59, 461–64). An object named is not itself the meaning of the name; the "meaning" of the name is *our* meaningful use of that name to designate that object. Such intelligent use of signs is inherently communicable to others (*Enc.* §431). Only by intelligence can or do we recollect whatever we have previously intuited outside ourselves, *as* the particular object, event, person, or structure it was, there and then, when we perceived it (*Enc.* §461). Only these intelligent achievements of human consciousness enable us also to be self-conscious (*Enc.* §424).<sup>17</sup> The mere recurrence within some "bundle of perceptions" of an old image does not suffice to *recall* its occasion *as* having occurred when and wherever it did; indeed, Hume's bundle theory fails to account for the contrast between *stored* memories (of which in principle one is not currently aware) and any active, occurrent recollection. Moreover, Hume's empiricism fails to account for how we so very ably recall which words to use when, as he provides no specifically *empiricist* account of our ever-active "imagination," to which alone he assigns all of these remarkably intelligent activities. Throughout, Hegel argues against a host of naturalistic, historicist, and associationist attempts to reduce human intelligence to more primitive,

<sup>17</sup> For an excellent demonstration of the kind of careful explication Hegel's concise paragraphs on philosophical psychology require, deserve, and reward, see Cramer (1979).

more obviously physiological or merely psychological (associationist) processes, and he critically rejects the debate about whether language is the origin of intelligence, or vice versa: they are integrally interrelated; neither can be derived from the other. Throughout his analysis, Hegel refashions Kant's sophisticated account of judgment, using it to update and to reconfigure Aristotle's account of our human soul, in part to underscore that, and how, our self-consciousness is an intellectual achievement, not a self-evident philosophical axiom.

## 9 Conclusion

To this extent and in these regards, Hegel's reexamination of human intelligence in its natural, bodily, and worldly context shows that ancient views about *noûs* structuring the cosmos and enabling our (partial) comprehension of it can be given an entirely credible, precise, natural-scientific, epistemological, and properly Critical sense. Conceiving the cosmos as articulated in the ways we learn from natural sciences, and careful comprehensive study of social sciences, together with social, intellectual, and cultural history, provide a comprehensive, disciplined, conceptually articulate way of detailing the grand vision of our integral world envisioned by ontological emanationism. I recall this point to stress the importance of Hegel's aim, throughout his examination of "Intelligence," to criticize and reject dichotomies in kind and oppositions between feeling, intuition, thought, and conceptual comprehension. Hegel argues for their mutual integrity (*Enc.* §445R), and argues that the rich content so often poignantly crystallized in feeling or intuition is only possible for an educated, cultured, intelligent, conceptually articulate spirit. Schelling's claims to "intellectual intuitions" of absolute reality, leaping beyond the conceptual limits of finite understanding, are mere empty depths, Hegel noted (*PhG*, *GW* 9:14.3–22, 17.12–29, 431.1–12; *Enc.* §§190Z; see Westphal 2018a, §§37–42). In contrast, Goethe had profoundly rich feelings and intuition, because he himself was profoundly educated and thoughtful (*Enc.* §§401Z, 447R, 448Z). Though he would not nominate Hegel in this regard, Nietzsche rightly highlighted Stendhal's observation:

Pour être bon philosophe, il faut être sec, clair, sans illusion. Un banquier qui a fait fortune a une partie du caractère requis pour faire des découvertes en philosophie, c'est à dire pour voir clair dans ce qui est;

Ce qui est un peu différent de parler éloquentement de brillantes chimères.

To be a good philosopher, one must be dry, clear, without illusion. A banker who has made a fortune has one characteristic required to make discoveries in philosophy: to see clearly into what is. – That’s a bit different than speaking eloquently about brilliant chimeras. (Stendhal 1855, 2:87; quoted approvingly by Nietzsche 1886, §39, though without the last line)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> I am grateful to Marina Bykova for her kind invitation, as editor of this volume, to make my thoughts on these topics (much) more concrete and determinate! An initial version of Section 6 was part of my presentation at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation Conference, “Ideas from Plato to Husserl,” organized by Sanem Yazıcıoğlu and hosted by Istanbul University (Oct. 4–6, 2017). I am grateful for discussion on that splendid occasion, and especially for a question posed by my student, Seniye Tilev. To Bill deVries I wish to dedicate this essay, in friendship and gratitude. I found him by finding his dissertation in the university library at Pittsburgh in 1982, while he was in Germany revising it to become his (1988) book. I was much encouraged by his approach and interpretation, and then delighted when both of us were appointed to the University of New Hampshire (1988). Discussions, reading groups, and correspondence with Bill have been both memorable and fertile, in many ways no one could anticipate. *Thank you, Bill!*

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## *Derangements of the Soul*

*Allegra de Laurentiis*

In *Moby-Dick; or, the Whale* (1851), Herman Melville writes that “there is no folly of the beasts of the earth which is not infinitely outdone by the madness of man.” Hegel gives a sophisticated explanation of this fact, namely, that proper madness (*der Wahn*) is a peculiarly *human* condition. This argument is developed in the context of the Anthropology’s broader theory of the feeling soul (*Die fühlende Seele*: §§403–10).<sup>1</sup> This prominently includes an explanation of the endogenous transformation of the sentient organism into bodily self-awareness, a change which Hegel calls the “awakening” of the sentient soul (*die empfindende Seele*) to the feeling of self (*Selbstgefühl*: §407).<sup>2</sup> The active condition of an individual capable of feeling – no longer capable only of sentience<sup>3</sup> – implies the capacity for self-feeling. This is because the very activity of feeling consists of a permanent leading back of sensations (impressions, affections) toward a center.

Since, according to Hegel, the phase of development in which the soul is most prone to being led astray from her<sup>4</sup> path – i.e., to becoming deranged – is precisely the feeling phase, one of the chief features of the feeling soul also marks the common forms of insanity. It is the following: in feeling, there is no distinction *for the soul* between inner and outer, so that the question of whether the center toward which she refers all her

<sup>1</sup> In the following, the designations *Enc.* 1, 2 or 3 are eliminated from citations referring to the 1830 edition of the *Encyclopaedia*, except for quotes set off from the text. All translations are mine.

<sup>2</sup> To this extent, Petry’s translation of *Selbstgefühl* as “self-awareness” (*Enc.* 3P, 2:323ff.) is fully justified. However, based on the possible psychologistic conflation of “self-awareness” with “self-consciousness,” whenever possible I avoid “awareness” in favor of “self-feeling.”

<sup>3</sup> Sensibility (*Sensibilität*), sentience (*Empfindung*), and feeling (*Gefühl*) must be distinguished as they refer to different stages of living beings’ development (see de Laurentiis 2019). The particular distinction between sentience and feeling will be discussed later.

<sup>4</sup> I use feminine pronouns in referring to the soul to avoid potential misunderstandings. The ubiquitous “it” in English translations leads to occasional misattributions of qualities and changes to *das Leib* alone, while the reference in the original text is unequivocally to *die Seele*, which, as argued below, includes but is not reducible to corporeity.

affections is inward or outward, subjective or objective, or indeed mental or bodily, is meaningful only from the subsequent perspective of objective consciousness, the end stage of being-soul. It is only *for consciousness* that this center represents objectively the emergence of inward subjectivity. In empirical individual cases, in which this objective perspective becomes inhibited or suspended, the lack of a distinction between inner and outer reality becomes a prominent mark of insanity.

This essay is divided into five sections. The introductory Section I situates Hegel's theory of mental disorders in its systematic context in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. Section II traces Hegel's conception of a particular phase of psyche's development – the phase of the “self-feeling soul” – as privileged terrain for mental disorders. Section III emphasizes the dual nature (*das Zwiefache*) as well as the rational ground and moral dimension of the insane individual. Section IV provides a sketch of the surprising correlations between Hegel's and contemporary psychiatric taxonomy. In the concluding section (Section V), I highlight the crucial role of the disorder of the political life in Hegel's understanding of the deeper causes (not the triggers but the ground) of individual derangement.

## I Introduction

It is reasonably well known that Hegel's specific categorizations of illnesses of the soul is drawn from those of predecessors (especially Kant) and contemporaries (especially Pinel).<sup>5</sup> Hegel's definitions and classifications are important and worthy of study<sup>6</sup> (see Section IV), not just from the perspective of psychiatric history but also in view of current psychiatric standards of classification. However, Hegel's grounding of the logic of derangement (*Verrücktheit*) in a particular metaphysical conception of the soul is afforded here more space on account of its greater philosophical significance.

Two theses underlie the following succinct reconstruction of Hegel's account of insanity. The first pertains to what may be called the

<sup>5</sup> The issues of whether Philippe Pinel (1745–1826) or Vincenzo Chiarugi (1759–1820) is the originator of the classifications most *en vogue* in the nineteenth century, and thus the “father” of modern psychiatry and the initiator of the unshackling of patients, is helpfully discussed in Grange 1963. Hegel at any rate relies heavily on Pinel's classifications and practices. Pinel conceives of insanity in terms of *aliénation mentale* and proposes a “moral treatment” to replace the physio-anatomical and punitive remedies of the Ancient Régime (Pinel 1992). His famous statement that one must be able to “subdue agitated madmen while respecting human rights” (*ibid.*, 731) well captures his position. See also Weiner 1992. On Foucault's criticism of Pinel, see below, Note 25.

<sup>6</sup> For a comparison between Hegel's and Pinel's classifications, see Berthold-Bond 1995, 21.

ontologically hybrid (hylomorphic)<sup>7</sup> nature of Hegel's "soul," an existent (*ein Seiendes*) that participates at once in nature and spirit. This explains, among other things, Hegel's repeated claim that genuine insanity can only affect the soul, not spirit proper: "Spirit is free and thus for itself incapable of this disease" (*Enc.* §408R).<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that the soul is a stage in the development of spirit, in her primal and more simple modes of existence nature and spirit are still undistinguishable "moments" in her. This immediacy of the soul, which also translates into a lack of distinction for the soul, may be reenacted at higher levels of psychic development, thereby providing a blueprint for forms of derangement. It is the hylomorphic nature of the soul that makes the talk of "mental illness" meaningful in the first place:

Only spirit . . . as thing, i.e., as a *natural being* and *entity* [*als Natürliches und Seiendes*], is capable of derangement . . . Hence derangement is a disease of the psychical [*des Psychischen*], undividedly of body and spirit; the inception as well as the healing may appear to originate more from the one or the other side. (*Enc.* §408R)

The opening section of the Anthropology introduces this hybrid "spirit as entity" as a first result of nature's self-sublation into spirit, a process that can be described only in paradoxical terms: "Spirit that has become means that nature sublates itself over against itself as the untrue, and thus that spirit . . . presuppose itself as a *simple* universality in which spirit is *soul*, not yet spirit" (§388). "Spirit that is not yet spirit," or an entity "undividedly of body and spirit," defines the central subject matter of the Anthropology. One of the empirical consequences of this hylomorphic ontology of the soul is that, for Hegel, all genuine forms of insanity must be psychosomatic:<sup>9</sup> "the *soul-disease* is not just *comparable* with *bodily* disease but more or less connected with it because . . . corporeity is . . . necessary for the empirical existence of both spirit and the soul-like [*das Seelenhafte*]" (*Enc.* §406Z).

<sup>7</sup> Despite the caution justly recommended by Wolff 1992 about the indiscriminate use of "hylomorphism" as a catch-all term, I defend a qualified use to characterize the ontology of Hegel's *Seele* in de Laurentiis 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Despite his explicit rejection of the common term *Geisteskrankheit* in favor of *Seelenkrankheit*, Hegel uses the first more than once, particularly in §408Z, because here he employs "spirit" as a stand-in for "finite spirit."

<sup>9</sup> Hegel does not use "psychosomatic" for shared affections of the corporeal and the mental precisely because *Seele*, *das Psychische*, or *das Seelenhafte* always already denote the unity of body and soul. "Spiritosomatic" would be more accurate, but awkward. By Hegel's time at any rate "psychosomatism" had been in use for a century and a half, having been introduced by the "iatromechanick" Giorgio Baglivi of the Roman Collegio La Sapienza (Baglivi 1696).

The second thesis underlying the following discussion is that the contrasts between the logical features of the life-defining activities of sentience (*Empfindung*), feeling (*Gefühl*), and grasping (*Begreifen*) are key to understanding a further general feature of insanity, namely, that it confines the affected individual's intellectual and practical horizons to the sphere of particularity (*Besonderheit*). While sensing can only refer to singular affections, and grasping is always of universals (i.e., concepts), the domain of feeling is that of the particular. When the selfhood of universal consciousness no longer predominates, self-feeling – the soil in which insanity may take root – replaces it with its particularity:

The feeling totality as individuality consists essentially of this: to differentiate oneself in oneself and to awaken *to the diremption in oneself* according to which [individuality] has *particular* feelings . . . The subject as such posits these as *its* feelings *in itself*. It is sunk in this *particularity* . . . In this way it is *self-feeling* – and it is this, moreover, only in the *particular feeling*. (*Enc.* 3 §407)

While the feeling-centered life marks a necessary phase in the development of every human soul, it may turn into derangement if a fully conscious subject reverts to it as chief authority for thought and action: my particular world-view, beliefs, aims, fears, or urges become endowed with the status of objective universals, no matter the evidence to the contrary provided by my consciousness.

In developed consciousness, “I” refers to the universal dimension of a subject capable of thinking and interacting with a world it grasps as standing opposite to it (*die gegenständliche Welt*). However, the feeling soul is not yet – or, in the case of the insane, no longer – such a self- and world-conscious “I” but only an indistinct, at times incoherent particularity, to which Hegel refers with apt vagueness (and in Swabian idiom) as *Selbstischkeit* or “selfness” (*Enc.* §§402R, 405, 412Z) – a comparatively rudimentary precursor of selfhood. The insane condition is therefore marked by self-conscious individuals’ attempting to take refuge (but finding no solace) in the subjective particularity of their feelings, and thereby losing their previous capacity to distinguish and to mutually complement objectivity and subjectivity.

## II Suggestions of Madness in the Feeling Soul

Hegel’s systematic account of general and specific forms of human derangement takes up the entirety of the main text, Remark, and Addition

to §408. But four preceding passages (from *Enc.* §§392R, 402Z, 405Z, and 407) prepare the way for the fuller explication found in the derangement section.

The common task of those previous sections has been to reconstruct the process by which a merely sentient organism becomes a feeling individual. The result of this process is tersely formulated in §403: "The feeling individual is . . . the subjectivity of sentience . . . The soul as feeling is no longer merely natural but inward individuality." Feeling, in other words, subjectivizes the mere facts of sensation; it is a sensing of sentience. The transition is enabled by the entelechism of the anthropic soul, whose intrinsic telos is the attainment of objective consciousness.<sup>10</sup> At the individual level, these highly complex transitions from sentience to feeling to consciousness may become so precarious, and the final stage attained so unstable, that disease may arise: "the peculiarity of this condition . . . [is] the fact that in *derangement* the *soul-like* is no longer in a relation of *mere difference* from *objective* consciousness but in a relation of *direct opposition*, and thus no longer *mingles* with it" (*Enc.* §408Z). In the healthy psyche, feeling and rationality differ and coexist in this difference. Insanity sets in, not in the absence of rationality ("just like physical illness is not . . . complete loss of health": §408R), but when reason's difference from feeling becomes an outright contradiction. Derangement, in other words, is an auto-immune disorder of the soul.

The first of the passages providing a context for the explication of derangement (*Enc.* §392R) falls in the treatment of the fundamental qualities of the natural soul ("Natural qualities": §§392–95). These are features of organic life that Hegel discusses in a preliminary way, abstracting from life's dynamic features, which are treated subsequently ("Natural changes": §§396–98). Only the union of qualities and changes does justice to the full concept of natural life, dealt with under the heading of "Sentience" (*Enc.* §§399–402).

In this initial, merely qualitative consideration of being-soul Hegel presupposes the theories of modern naturalists like Lamarck (1744–1829) and Treviranus (1776–1837)<sup>11</sup> in that he treats natural life-forms (plant, animal, and human organisms) as segments of a continuum of cosmic and terrestrial phenomena. Geology, climate, or the continental drift, for example, explain the diversification of living species

<sup>10</sup> In this context, "objective" and "rational consciousness" denote "understanding" or "ratiocination" (*Verstand, Rasonnieren*), not "reason" (*Vernunft*).

<sup>11</sup> Lamarck 1809; Treviranus 1802. See also *Enc.* 3P, 2:447ff.



and varieties, as well as the diversity of human material cultures on Earth. As segments on this continuum, living organisms are necessarily subject to and even symbiotic with (*Mitleben*: cf. *Enc.* §392R & Z) universal forces and motions. Hegel remarks that plants and animals are more subject to these influences than humans, though even the latter can never entirely escape them. With the increase in our species' self-cultivation (*Bildung*) the strength and relevance of cosmic forces may well taper to an infinitesimal magnitude for our consciousness, yet objectively, those forces continue to influence the psychosomatic whole to which consciousness belongs. The non-mediated character of living organisms' connection to their surroundings includes of course their relation to their bodies. In humans, this immediacy plays a significant role, once consciousness no longer prevails, in the development of psychic disease.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Hegel mentions here already that simultaneous affections of body and spirit by normally overlooked chronobiological processes like circadian or seasonal rhythms often become apparent (however much they remain ill understood)<sup>13</sup> "in diseased states to which derangement also belongs, in the depression of self-conscious life" (*Enc.* §392R).

The second passage pertinent to derangement belongs to the Addition to §402, centered on the above-mentioned transition of living individuals from sentience to feeling. This change begins with the soul's growing into opposition with, and hence also acquiring a distance from, her own hitherto entirely corporeal, sense-bound existence: "the soul opposes herself to her substantiality, she confronts herself, and simultaneously attains in her own determinate sensations the feeling of herself . . . of her *totality*" (*Enc.* §402Z). This endogenous transition from sentience to feeling corresponds to the logical transition from singularity (*Einzelheit*) to particularity (*Besonderheit*).<sup>14</sup> While each sensation is a singular state of the organism, feeling is the particular condition of the sentient individual as a whole. The feeling soul is the "posited totality of her *particular* world" (*Enc.* §403R), in which she relates only to herself. Hence all feeling is feeling of self, and this selfness is a particularity that at this stage constitutes the whole of the individual's existence: "What I sense on this standpoint, that I *am*, and what I *am*, that I sense" (*Enc.* §402Z).

<sup>12</sup> This immediacy is also crucial for Mesmer's "magnetism," which will be discussed later.

<sup>13</sup> A partial understanding of circadian rhythms has been attained only recently in regard to their underlying molecular mechanisms, but still not in regard to how they affect the psyche.

<sup>14</sup> On the logic of singularity and particularity, see *Science of Logic*, Doctrine of the Concept, *GW* 12:49–50; *Enc.* I, xix–xx and xxx n. 13; Inwood 1992, 302–5.

Self-feeling is therefore not the same as self-consciousness, but only its presentiment. While sensations are direct affections of a largely passive “animal subject,”<sup>15</sup> feelings are their virtualizations: the feeling soul is “the *ideality* or *negativity* of all sensations” that are found in her (ibid.). In the next section, Hegel then refers to the psychic space in which sensations occurring *in* me become feelings *for* me as to the “indeterminate shaft [*bestimmungsloser Schacht*]<sup>16</sup> in which all this is conserved without existing” (Enc. §403R). The reference here is to the preconscious awareness that all sensations, infinite in number, that affect me (Leibniz’s *petites perceptions*) belong to one and the same soul-substance, i.e., to the same living body, and hence are all “mine.” Hegel refers to the feeling soul repeatedly as monad,<sup>17</sup> as in the following passage: “The [feeling] individual is the monad knowing itself in itself, the self-intuiting of the *genius*” (Enc. 406R).<sup>18</sup>

The above definition of feeling as “negativity” of sensation means that feelings alter, without destroying, the purely physiological quality of affections by transforming them into perceptions *for* the individual. Like pain and pleasure, feelings are preconceptual forms of meaning for the soul affected by them. It is precisely the result of this negation or “idealization” that constitutes what Hegel calls an intuitive presage of selfhood: “In-between *representational consciousness* . . . and *immediate sentience* . . . there is . . . the *soul feeling* or *presaging* herself [*die . . . sich selber fühlende oder ahnende Seele*]” (Enc. §402Z). This is the most fragile moment of being-soul – no longer mere sentience, not yet objective consciousness – that harbors the highest potential for mental alienation. It is a spell in which the soul is most at risk of becoming “*torn from herself*” (ibid.). As Melville knew, this cannot affect animals other than humans, because only humans confront the “contradiction between freedom and unfreedom” (ibid.), that is, between spirituality (*Geistigkeit*) and corporeity (*Leiblichkeit*).

Hegel’s stress on the “mere” particularity of feeling is crucial. In feeling, the soul neither captures the singular objects of sentience nor grasps the universal objects of consciousness. Moreover, feeling does not just lie

<sup>15</sup> This is Hegel’s standard designation of the subject of sensing in the Philosophy of Nature: see, e.g., Enc. 2 §350Z.

<sup>16</sup> Mills 2002 explores this Hegelian metaphor in the perspective of its being an “anticipation” of psychoanalytic findings.

<sup>17</sup> See also Enc. §§389Z, 403R, 405. Hegel’s distinctions between sentient, feeling, and actual soul are adaptations of Leibniz’s three levels of perception that define monads’ degrees (simple monads, souls, and minds or spirits).

<sup>18</sup> On the meanings of *genius*, see Note 22.

midway between these logical poles but shares in both: the feeling soul “has not yet advanced to the dissociation [*Trennung*] of the universal and the singular, [nor] of the subjective and the objective” (ibid.). This dissociation is for Hegel the mark of a healthy development. It is a first, albeit abstract liberation of the individual from the immediacy of the affections found in her (*Empfindungen*). All further developments of self-feeling – except for regressions toward it – can be viewed as a “struggle for liberation [*Befreiungskampf*]” (ibid.). The first stage in this struggle consists of attaining the presentiment (*Ahnung*) of selfhood. This is the opaque awareness of oneself as a distinct unit in a broader non-self-like context – empirical examples of which are an infant’s exploration of her bodily boundaries or the dimmed self-reference of individuals in hypnotic trance.

Appealing to his audience’s broad acquaintance with the theories and therapeutic practices of Mesmerism,<sup>19</sup> Hegel refers to hypnotic trance as the feeling soul’s activity of dreaming through (*Durchträumen*) her contents. The existence of “animal magnetism,” as theorized by Mesmer, and the therapeutic efficacy of hypnotism are taken up in more detail in the Addition to §406.<sup>20</sup> I only note here two aspects of this that are directly relevant to insanity.

First, Hegel’s nuanced acceptance of the “magnetic” character of animal life – notwithstanding his explicit rejection of specific nomenclatures and of outright charlatanry – amounts to an acknowledgment of the existence of primitive psychic functions fully active in advanced stages of human development. Individuals who are already capable of grasping a world independent of their wishes, dreams, or power are nonetheless vulnerable to relapsing into their previous (infant-like) relation to the world as if it were exclusively *for* and *of* their mind. This inherent weakness of every

<sup>19</sup> Adapting ancient theories of astral influence to modern science, Franz A. Mesmer (1734–1815) hypothesized a “fluid” connecting all living organisms with the cosmos. He considered this invisible connection to be the same as that between magnet and metal. Physical and spiritual disease resulted from an imbalance or interruption of the connection; therapy consisted of attempts at rebalancing or reinstating it. The perceived charlatanry involved in Mesmer’s fast-spreading trance-inducing therapies (“mesmeric sleep”) prompted Louis XVI to order an investigation (1784) by some of the time’s most celebrated scientists (Franklyn, Lavoisier, and Bailly, among others). The investigators found no proof of the existence of animal magnetism (which they understood by analogy with electricity), so mesmeric practices were banned. Despite this, Mesmer’s studies were continued by Armand de Puységure, Karl A. Kluge, Pierre van Gehrt, and Karl Schelling, among others – all mentioned by Hegel in §406Z as proof that some good can come from French-style “naïve metaphysics” (ibid.). On Mesmerism, see Crabtree 2016.

<sup>20</sup> On the millenarian tradition leading up to nineteenth-century medical theories of the psyche, see Veith 1965. On Mesmerism and magnetism in Hegel, see Magee 2001, 213ff., and 2013; and Berthold-Bond 1995, ch. 2.

psychic development is the target of therapeutic interventions based on hypnotism or “magnetization.”<sup>21</sup> The vulnerability is natural and real – becoming *anthropos* is no small feat of nature – which is why some of these practices actually succeed. In this regard Hegel notes later that the existence of mental health should surprise us more than that of mental disease: “one ought rather to answer the *inverse* question, namely, how the soul, *confined* to her *inwardness* . . . , arrives at the *actual* difference of these two sides, hence at *genuinely objective*, understanding- and rational consciousness” (*Enc.* §408Z). The answer to this question (i.e., how the naturally self-dirempting soul normally escapes the fate of derangement) is to be sought only at the end of the Anthropology, in the treatment of the fully actualized soul’s habituation of her body (*Enc.* §§409–12). The second relevant facet of Hegel’s embracing the term “animal magnetism” is one whose influence still lingers in contemporary psychiatry. It is its implication of bipolarism: “in *animal* as in *inorganic* magnetism there is an immediately reciprocal relation between two existences” (*Enc.* §406Z). As he will argue in the derangement section, the splitting of the subject into two persons is an intrinsic connotation of the concept of derangement, and hence an underlying trait of its empirical manifestations (see below, Section IV).

The third passage anticipating the derangement section belongs to §405Z. Hegel describes here oneiric and fetal conditions as well as the relation of individual consciousness to one’s “*genius*” or core personality<sup>22</sup> as cases of non-mediated processes that ancient traditions have called “magical”: “By this expression is meant a relation of inwardness to externality or otherness . . . that lacks mediation; a magical power is . . . un-mediatedly efficacious power” (*Enc.* §405Z).<sup>23</sup> The silent impact of

<sup>21</sup> James Braid (1795–1860), the most famous proponent of hypnotic therapies of the time, strongly advocates distinguishing hypnotism, which he views as medically sound, from mesmeric magnetization, which he considers quackery. Hegel still uses the two interchangeably: see, e.g., *Enc.* §406Z, where he speaks of “magnetized” and “magnetizer” in hypnotic sessions.

<sup>22</sup> Hegel uses *genius* – Latin for Socrates’ *daimon*, eventually widely adopted in German letters and medicine – with at least two meanings (neither of which matches the English “genius”). First, *genius* denotes the ever-present self-feeling that (not unlike Freud’s *libido*) dominates the underdeveloped or the regressing soul; second, it denotes this self-feeling in consciously sublated form. Talk of an “evil” and a “good” *genius* of individuals (*Enc.* §408R) refers to their respective dominance over one another. They relate like sleep to waking: in health, the feeling *genius* is a subdued presence in the *genius* of consciousness. In our context, Hegel emphasizes the union of conscious and feeling contents: the *genius* is the totality of innate and acquired “basic interests” (§406R) and “particularities” (§408R). Berthold-Bond 1995, 87 and 170, identifies Hegel’s *genius* with the merely feeling, potentially evil one; but there is also the good *genius* (see §§408R and 412Z).

<sup>23</sup> The classical meanings of “magic” all center, as in Hegel’s usage, on the notion of non-mediated efficacy: see Schwemer 2015 and Hanegraaff 2016.

the adult environment on children, or the influence of strong personalities over weaker ones – including “contagions” of the collective imaginary that become manifest as “epidemics of insanity” like epochal witch hunts<sup>24</sup> – are examples of real, as opposed to mythological, magic efficacy. The most familiar case is of course the everyday “magic exercised by the individual spirit on its *own* corporeity” (ibid.). These real occurrences are for Hegel the kind of “external touchstone for the truth of a philosophy” (*Enc.* 1 §6) that corroborates the hylomorphic nature of the soul.

The final passage of interest is in §407. It describes the crucial shift of the healthy subject on its way to selfhood as an “awakening” to its own “*inward diremption*” (*Enc.* §407). Just like our physiological waking-up is a successful leap in self-reference – a daily renewed awareness of the identity underlying the difference of our sleeping and waking self – so the splitting of the soul into self-feeling particularity, on the one hand, and self-conscious universality, on the other, is successfully overcome by the subject’s becoming aware of its own diremption. Most individuals complete this speculative feat successfully. For others, the journey never reaches completion. For still others, exposed to traumatic events, the journey becomes reversed.

To sum up: the naturally occurring internal schisms of the soul, from living identity of nature and spirit through sentience, feeling, and the dawn of consciousness, give rise to temporary imbalances in the developing individual. A state of inner tension is life’s normal condition. The resolution of each imbalance is attained whenever the more differentiated (“concrete”) pole subsumes and transforms (“negates” and “idealizes”) the other. A malady of the soul sets in when the higher state of self-conscious being (*Selbstbewusstsein*) capitulates to its less differentiated forerunner, self-feeling (*Selbstgefühl*). Consciousness is still present in the diseased mind but no longer governs. There is no mere disconnect between feeling and thinking in this state; derangement is the painful result of a violent struggle of the two “moments” in one and the same individual, who necessarily perceives himself as being two. This is the source of the deep “unhappiness” (*Enc.* §408R & Z) that inevitably accompanies, Hegel reminds us, authentic madness.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> See Hegel’s manuscript remark first reported in Schneider 1972 and translated in *Enc.* 3P, 2:229.

<sup>25</sup> This dimension of psychopathologies is strikingly absent from the widely influential “post-humanist” perspective of Foucault. His criticism of the revolutionary psychiatry of the 1790s (Foucault 1961, ch. 9) ignores, among much else, that this historical movement pioneers patients’ protection (juridical, political, and personal) from traditional abuses and criminalization.

### III On Being Two in One Condition

“Sanity” (*Besonnenheit*) consists of being conscious of one’s inwardness, of one’s externality, and of the difference between the two. Individuals emerging from somnambulistic or hypnotic conditions bracket out their alternate self to the point of amnesia. Disturbed individuals are aware of the difference between inward and outward worlds but unable to live well within their tension. Deranged individuals, finally, cannot endure the tension at all. They can neither ignore one of its poles, nor can they attune the two with one another: for them, these are not just divergent perspectives but mental states inexorably bound by mutual opposition.

Mental disturbance becomes authentic derangement when the particularity of feeling seizes the mantle of objectivity and, by that, of universality. My social status, my physical or intellectual capacities, my gods, or my enemy are then what I feel them to be; and this my feeling about them is for me the objective order of things in which all other agents participate or ought to participate with me. Being conscious of one’s place in an external order includes being cognizant of one’s own subordination in this whole: to order something in a pre-existing order means to subordinate the former to the latter. When it comes to finding one’s place in the world, the individual in the throes of insanity can no longer by himself recognize and perform this ordering. It is worth noting that Hegel’s generic characterization of insanity as a disorder, implicitly definable by contrast with an existing order, is still fully operative in the contemporary terminology of “mental disorders.”

Bringing together the strands of the previous discussions, the Addition to §408 begins with explicating the general concept of derangement. An individual may be said to become deranged when, having risen to consciousness, he no longer continues to “posit” his feelings in the latter — i.e., no longer converts them into known contents — but retains them as feelings alongside conscious contents. He is now trapped in a contradiction between himself as universal selfhood and himself as particular selfness,

In his 1794 manifesto, Pinel (1992) explains, e.g., that terrors and manias inspired by religion need medical attention and psychological alleviation, not punishment or contempt. Foucault brands the entire history of psychiatry a “monologue of reason” directed against the insane, whose “authentic voice” he alluringly likens to the “poetry of the world.” This suppresses the historical fact that despite its rudimental cognitions Enlightenment psychiatry extended human rights protection to “inmates,” often returning them to family and civil society. Foucauldianism vastly underplays the human price of insanity — the sorrow and despair that result (as Kant, Pinel, or Hegel remind us) from living in a perpetual war against oneself. In post- or anti-humanism, the alleged defense of the voiceless easily turns into the strident sound of cynicism.

because these two modes of self-reference have ceased to relate like a universal to a particular (like concept to object). They are now equals struggling for dominance. If this duality (*Zweiheit*) is not resolved, the *genius* of one and the same subject will consist of two personalities: “in *authentic derangement*, one individual’s *two personalities* exist not as *two conditions*, but as *one and the same condition*, so that these mutually *negative personalities* – the soul-like and the ratiocinating consciousness – *touch each other* and know of *one another*” (*Enc.* §408Z). A radical form of schizophrenia (not Hegel’s term)<sup>26</sup> is singled out here as common feature of all types of genuine madness (*Wahnsinn*). Here again, contemporary psychiatry does not stray too far from Hegel’s casuistic of *Zwiefaches* or *Zweiheit*: “schizophrenia” is today the umbrella term for a spectrum of disorders, and “schizophrenia proper” a sub-type. What we call “split personality” or “dissociative identity” would denote for Hegel special instances of the radical two-ness of the deranged, namely, the parallel existence and painful mutual recognition of two personalities in one. Hegel’s point is best understood by contrast with the similar but not insane condition of somnambulism. In the latter, the waking individual is unaware of his nightly behavior, and vice versa; but in the unresolved duality of insanity there is no hiding from what our consciousness knows when we seek refuge in our exclusive feeling, and there is no escaping from the feeling world, regardless of what we know:

The deranged subject is therefore *at home with itself* in the *negative of itself*; . . . the twofold entity [*das Zwiefache*] into which it disaggregates is not brought to *unity*. Hence, though *in-itself* one and the same, the objective self-reference of the deranged subject is not to one coinciding with itself, one inwardly undivided, but to one breaking up into *two personalities*. (*Enc.* 3 §408Z)

Self-discordance is of course integral to every living being. But the distinguishing feature of human insanity is that its inherent negativity is not a stage in a progression. The soul of one individual disaggregates here into two “totalities” with no further, higher unification in sight.

The ground of the differentiation into forms of mental weakness, of folly, and of madness proper lies in Hegel’s conception of the soul as first

<sup>26</sup> *Schizophrenie* (mind-separation) was introduced in the twentieth century by Eugen Bleuler (1911). In Hegel’s time, *Katatonie* was the term of choice. “Catatonia” today covers a variety of schizophrenic, bipolar, and depressive symptoms. See the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (hereafter *DSM 5*) (American Psychiatric Association 2013), 87ff. (on the schizophrenia spectrum), 123ff. (on bipolarisms), and 645ff. (on personality disorders).



phase in spirit's development "from substance to subject." In these beginnings, the soul is necessarily both substantiality and (incipient) subjectivity. While normal, borderline, and abnormal soul conditions all display the same ontological dichotomy, the devil hides in the details: what is a tolerable, controllable, even productive duality in the healthy individual may become, for a variety of reasons among which prevails the breakup of social structures (see Section V), a devastating rupture in the insane. For example, just like mental representations impact physiology on account of the soul's hylomorphic nature (ideas of social impropriety prompt blushing; imagined grief prompts tears), so derangement is often expressed in physical afflictions like the somatization<sup>27</sup> of feeling or desire. No longer sublated into consciousness, feeling makes itself independent and seeks expression in the physicality of the soul, acquiring "the form of an entity [*eines Seienden*], hence of something corporeal [*eines Leiblichen*]" (*Enc.* §408Z). Gray zones between simple-mindedness, foolishness, and madness are commonly found in individual and collective reactions to societal breakdowns or in religious practices involving the abuse of one's body for ends other than health. Burdensome pilgrimages or extreme forms of asceticism in Hinduism or Christianity may count as simple foolishness (*Narrheit*) but may also become authentic madness (*Wahnsinn*): "[I]n the French revolution many . . . became mad due to the subversion of almost all civil conditions. The same effect is often brought about most dreadfully through religious causes" (*ibid.*). In the wake of the collapse of the political and religious orders of France, it is no surprise that religious delusion is also a recurrent theme in Pinel's studies on *aliénation mentale*: "Nothing is more atrocious and savage than the somber dreams and fanatical madness of an atrabilious worshiper" (Pinel 1992, 730). The Rousseauian correlation of insanity with the civil condition, moreover, is one of the structuring principles of Kant's classification of "maladies of the head" (*VKK, Ak* 2:257).<sup>28</sup> It becomes an underlying theme in Pinel's psychiatric practice and, as expanded to include all *Sittlichkeit* (see Section V), in Hegel's theory.

Even the boundaries between error (*Irrtum*) and insanity (*Irrsinn*: the erring sense) are permeable. That includes moral erring. A strong feeling

<sup>27</sup> Hegel uses not "somatization" but "embodiment" (*Verleiblichung*). Irrespective of terminology, the concept itself has accompanied definitions of "hysteria" since Hippocrates. The *DSM* replaced "hysteria" only in 1952 with "conversion symptom," borrowed from Freud. See Veith 1965, preface and chs. 2 and 11.

<sup>28</sup> The 1764 *Essay on the Maladies of the Head* distinguishes degrees of insanity and then classifies them into those that society merely ridicules (forms of folly) and those that it cares for (forms of imbecility and "maladies of reversal").



of hatred may push someone to the brink of madness but not push him over the edge; that is, it may not morph into the “self-externalization of insanity . . . the *contradiction* of a feeling [that has] become an *entity against* the totality of mediations that is . . . consciousness” (*Enc.* §408R).

Hegel introduces his audience to Pinel’s psychiatric practice in the Remark to §408: “This humane, i.e., both compassionate and rational treatment . . . presupposes the diseased individual as a being of reason [*als Vernünftiges*], and finds herein the firm hold by which to grasp the patient” (§408R). The theme of the rational and therefore moral nature of the madman is another thread common to Kant, Pinel, and Hegel. Kant’s *Essay* underlines that reason must be present in order for the self-conflict of the deranged to arise at all. He refers to degrees of mental weakness as “inverted,” “shackled,” and “disordered reason” (*VKK, Ak* 2:264). Thirty years later, Pinel refers to delirious mania and melancholy as syndromes of “alienated reason” and to therapy as restoration of “deranged reason” (Pinel 1992, 728, 730). This is how Pinel rectifies popular understandings of insanity:

The idea of madness by no means implies a total abolition of the mental faculties . . . Errors of reasoning are much rarer among madmen than is commonly thought, for they derive reliable inductions from a particular sequence of ideas that preoccupies them . . . [Rather,] imagination [is] . . . most susceptible to madness. A total upheaval of the rational faculty, or . . . a bizarre association of . . . incongruous . . . ideas, is quite rare. (Pinel 1992, 729–30)

Hegel himself refers to aggressive forms of madness as manifestations of the reciprocal “fury of reason against unreason” (*Enc.* §408Z). His initial exposition of the concept of soul’s self-estrangement in this addition brings the notion of reason’s role a step farther. Mind’s disorder, we read, is an imperfect version of reason: “The unity and separation of the opposite sides just mentioned, as found in derangement, is therefore still an *imperfect* one [*eine unvollkommene*]. This unity and this separation attains perfect form only in *rational, actually objective* consciousness” (ibid.). *Unvollkommenheit* denotes “lack of wholeness” or imperfection. Petry translates this as “incomplete” (*Enc.* 3P 1:335), which may suggest that rational consciousness completes the separation. For Hegel, however, a diremption is perfected not by a further drifting apart of its opposites but by the sublation of their difference into a higher unity. The immediately following explication helps elucidate the just quoted passage:

When I have raised myself to *rational* thinking, I have not just become an *object for or to me*, that is, not just a *subjective* identity of subjectivity and

objectivity; rather, I have also *separated* this identity from me, I have posited this identity as an actually *objective* one over against myself. In order to attain this perfect separation, the *feeling soul* must overcome . . . her *immediacy*, *naturalness*, *corporeity*, . . . reshaping these in an *objective* unity of subjectivity and objectivity . . . hence releasing her other from its immediate identity with her, as well as liberating herself from this other. (*Enc.* 3 §408Z)

As a rational individual, I have an objective grasp of myself as unity of my subjectivity and my objectivity. This grasp of myself is attained through detachment from (“perfect separation”) and objectivation of (“positing”) my own twofold nature. In derangement instead, in which I am my feeling, I am only a subjective unity of my subjectivity and objectivity. I can no longer detach myself from my duality: my life is mired in the “imperfect” separation of my psyche. In rational consciousness, we live in the identity of our identity and difference; in derangement, we dwell in the difference between our identity and difference – hence our suffering, our being by ourselves in the negative of ourselves. The road to the healing of the disrupted soul points toward a version of Stoic *oikeiōsis*: finding one’s home in the whole of oneself.

#### IV On the Empirical Forms of the Concept of Derangement

It is “philosophically insufficient” (§408Z), Hegel argues, to classify kinds of derangement on the basis of symptoms or typologies of mind contents. As all other manifestations of subjective spirit, derangement deserves first and foremost a rational account, that is, an account of the logic underlying symptoms, behaviors, hallucinatory contents, and the like. Moreover, the contents of deranged minds are such a contingent manifold (a bad infinity) as to be useless for nosological purposes. One must therefore analyze the “form differences” (*ibid.*) between *genera* of derangement. The formal definition of derangement in general characterizes it as spirit’s<sup>29</sup> “closure [*Verschlossenheit*]” or “self-sunkenness [*Insichversunkensein*]” (*Enc.* §408Z). This differs from the state of the somnambulist or the mesmerized individual. While these are “immediately” (non-reflectively) connected with present reality, the deranged is shut off from it. This distinction parallels a previous statement (*Enc.* §406Z): in dreaming or in the fetal life, I am already a double (*ein Zwiefaches*); but in derangement, I am an actual double (*ein wirklich Zwiefaches*).

<sup>29</sup> For Hegel’s use of *Geist* instead of *Seele* in this context, see Note 8.

While mind's self-enclosing characterizes all mental disorders, it assumes different configurations. The psyche may shrink ( $\alpha\alpha$ ) to vacuous selfness (weak mental determinacy), ( $\beta\beta$ ) to a selfness filled by a singular content to the exclusion of all others (manic folly), or ( $\gamma\gamma$ ) to a selfness torn between the idiosyncrasy and the universality of its contents (madness proper). The latter is the dismal condition – melancholic, distressed, or frenzied – that accompanies radical forms of madness.

In each of these major types, the mind has separated itself from reality. In the first, it sheds external representations<sup>30</sup> without replacing them; in the second, it is equally cut off from reality but filled with representations of its own making; in the third, it fills with representations of its own making while being also aware of reality. It is here that individuals experience most painfully their two worlds' incompatibility.

In outline, Hegel's taxonomy of derangements as weak mental determinacy, manic folly, and madness proper parallels the contemporary standard typology of "neurodevelopmental disorders," "schizophrenia spectrum," and "bipolarism" – a fact all the more striking in view of both Hegel's rejection of inductively obtained classifications, which is the avowed methodology of contemporary psychiatry, and psychiatry's equally explicit rejection of "speculative" nosologies (see Introduction to *DSM* 5).

The disorders Hegel classifies under ( $\alpha\alpha$ ) (for which he has no generic name) comprise syndromes of mental under- and over-determinacy. The sub-categories *Blödsinn* (imbecility), *Zerstreuung* (absentmindedness), and *Faserei* (rambling), together with the anecdotal examples he provides, show strong affinity with the symptomatic clustering of today's neurodevelopmental disorders: intellectual disabilities, communication, autism, learning, motor, and attention-deficit disorders (see *DSM* 5, 31–86). These states of under- and over-determinacy are for Hegel not so much kinds of insanity as weaknesses of spirit. (In Kant's Rousseauian account, they are maladies that civil society both fosters and mocks, but does not care for: fallacious reasoning, foolishness, pathological duplicity.) The first of Hegel's sub-types, "imbecility," is a paradigm of under-determinacy. It may be inborn (such as cretinism), accidentally acquired (*in utero*, as a result of epilepsy, and so on), or self-inflicted (through intemperate lifestyle). It sometimes presents as catalepsy – a hysteric behavior implying "organ paralysis" (§406Z: following widespread views on the continent, Hegel associates this with forms of melancholia allegedly rampant in England).

<sup>30</sup> "External representations" are "representations of externality," just as "objective consciousness" means "consciousness of objectivity."

The second sub-type, “absentmindedness,” is a temporary or enduring unawareness of reality (an “oblivious inattentiveness of spirit [*wissenlose Ungegenwart des Geistes*],” *ibid.*). This may signal a beginning of madness or else the presence of geniality. The third sub-type is the complement of absentmindedness: the “rambling” soul is directed at everything and focused on nothing. The individual becomes an “image of chaos” (*ibid.*). In extreme cases, this meandering mind may even transcend its disregard for reality by an act of “unconscious reversal” of it and lose itself in delirium.

Derangement as “folly proper” (ββ: *eigentliche Narrheit*) includes all cases in which the soul objectifies a particular feeling into a “fixed representation” (*ibid.*), i.e., an obsessive or compulsory idea.<sup>31</sup> “Self-sunkenness” here consists of being mired, not in one’s empty self but in the object of one’s exclusive attention. Far from being undetermined, the soul is wholly determined by one all-consuming interest. Folly displays a wide range of degrees, from small-mindedness and cultural parochialism, to hostility against life in general, to manic obsession – the latter a source of acute suffering. Folly’s immediate predecessors are unrestrained passions, e.g., vanity and pride, which Hegel interprets as compensatory mechanisms for a pervasive dissatisfaction with life. (Among other syndromes, “inflated self-esteem” and “delusional grandiosity” are current psychiatric labels for manifestations of bipolarism) (see *DSM* 5, 123–27). Folly is no weakness of mind: individuals in its grip display enormous strength in holding onto their idiosyncratic conviction. Even at the height of foolishness, they are still beings of reason, aware of the discrepancy between their total selves and their singular obsessions: “Fools have therefore, next to their distorting view in regards to one point, also a good, coherent consciousness, a correct take on things and the capacity for rational agency” (*ibid.*).

The common ground of Hegel’s sub-types of folly – life tedium, melancholy, spleen – is a generalized and deep-reaching repugnance for life. If prompted by personal loss or the collapse of one’s social world, these forms of *melancholia* are not irrational. Still, extreme hostility against sociality and unrelenting gloom may lead to suicide – the ultimate folly. The counterparts of these forms of negativism are states of heightened exhilaration (the “excessive euphoria” counted today as one feature of bipolarism) (see *DSM* 5, 127), often expressed in religious and political

<sup>31</sup> *DSM* 5, 87, defines “delusions” as fixed beliefs not amenable to change in the light of evidence. These include the whole slate suggested by Hegel: “persecutory,” “self-referential,” “grandiose,” “nihilistic,” and “somatic” fixations.

terms: the fool believes himself “*God, Christ, or King*” (ibid.), but otherwise symbolized in the fool’s identification with humble quotidian objects – “a *grain of barley* or a *dog*” (ibid.).

It is in the third form of derangement ( $\gamma\gamma$ ), madness proper (*Tollheit* or *Wahnsinn*), that the subject directly confronts its inner rift. The madman knows and suffers from it but cannot let go of the merely subjective world that dominates his mind. Instead, he attempts to make that world real, at once attempting to destroy (the other) reality. Writing in the wake of the French *terreur*, a younger Hegel had already described mad political action as the “terror of negativity” consequent to the (political) agent’s retreat into himself:

[In] absolute freedom there was neither a consciousness steeped in the manifold of reality [*Dasein*] . . . nor an *external* world in its own right . . . but [only] . . . the world purely in the form of self-consciousness . . . withdrawn from all . . . reality . . . into the simple self. (*PhG*, MM 3:439)

Thirteen years later, Hegel offers the same interpretation: “As much as freedom is, in itself, concrete, [in France] it was applied to actuality in . . . abstract form; and to realize abstractions in actuality amounts to actuality’s destruction” (*VGPh*, MM 20:331–32). We find the same assessment in the context of Hegel’s explication of monotheistic fervor:

*fanaticism* [is] enthusiasm for an abstraction . . . that relates to what exists by negating it. Fanaticism exists essentially only through the devastation, the destruction of what is concrete . . . *La religion et la terreur* was here [in Islamic fanaticism] the principle just like, for Robespierre, *la liberté et la terreur*. (*VGesch*, MM 12:431)

Now in the Anthropology Hegel describes the madman in the same words: “The deranged subject cannot let go of this [representation]; instead, he wants to make it real, or to annihilate reality” (*Enc.* §408Z). For Hegel as for his predecessors, genuine madness neither originates in nor is confined to the realm of ideas. For Hegel, its deepest sources are historical traumas: the “displacement of an individual’s world, . . . the violent *reversal* and *unraveling*” of the social edifice (ibid.). While many individuals adjust to the new, madness assails those “unable to find [themselves] in the *present*” (ibid.).

Suffering from one’s inner rupture is observable in various degrees of “hypochondria” (and, we would add, paranoia): from quiet pain (Pinel’s *manie sans delire*) to the fury (*manie avec delire*) that results from the “*fury of reason* against *unreason*, and of the latter against the first.” Incessantly “tortured by figments” (ibid.), the hypochondriac may develop mean-

spirited wrath against the strictures of reality. His subjective interests, visions, and urges are released into the world. The ethical “yoke” of really existing *Sittlichkeit* is thrown off in favor of drives, natural and acquired: “the sinister subterranean forces of the heart are unleashed,” sometimes even the “lust to kill . . . those most tenderly loved” (ibid.). Yet again, since this dynamics issues from a conflict of *reason* with unreason, the iniquity of the criminally insane “does not exclude moral and ethical feelings . . . Pinel states explicitly that he has nowhere seen more loving spouses and fathers than in the madhouse” (ibid.).

Despite the apparent hopelessness of forms of madness, therefore, Hegel follows Pinel’s view that healing is possible. And since the soul is hylo-morphic, successful remedies will have to be “part *physical*, part *mental*” (ibid.). Therapies will not cure forms of imbecility, as these are not forms of derangement proper, but they may cure folly and madness. One thing is certain, Hegel adds: the purely physical procedures formerly performed at the infamous Bedlam asylum<sup>32</sup> are “the worst of all” (ibid.).

## V External Disorders and the Inner Bedlam

In contrast to contemporary etiologies of psychopathologies, Hegel persistently associates radical forms of insanity with upheavals in historical reality. This connection, already discussed by Kant and assumed by Pinel, is the most interesting (not the exclusive) feature of Hegel’s account of pathological forms of retreat from reality,<sup>33</sup> including types of criminal insanity.

Although this cannot be further pursued here, it should be noted that the theme of the retreat into radical subjectivism as breeding ground for “evil” is central to Hegel’s analysis of criminal *political* action, including terror, in the *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right* (Part Two, “Morality”). The moral decisionist’s appeal to inaccessible but “authentic” recesses of his feeling self or “conscience” (*Gewissen*) justifies every action and its opposite. Individual conscience stripped of any knowledge of objective

<sup>32</sup> By the eighteenth century, the “treatment” of the insane in London’s Bethlehem asylum (founded six centuries earlier) was exclusively corporeal, including cold hydrotherapy (regarded as anti-inflammatory), purging, bleeding, and the rationing of food (ostensibly conducive to reducing excess energy). On the mid-century debate that erupted between reformists and Bedlam physicians, the subsequent parliamentary inquiries on the conditions in the asylum, and Quakers’ public denunciations during Hegel’s time, see Andrews et al., 1997.

<sup>33</sup> Strangely, Berthold-Bond 1995, 177–216, criticizes Hegel for his alleged “silence” about this connection.

right “consists simply of being on the verge of *evil*” (*RPh* §139R). In the context of a discussion of criminal infringements of human right (*Recht der Menschheit*) Hegel uses the term “disease”: the combination of radical subjectivism with power, he says, is “the principal standpoint and disease of this our time” (Hegel’s note to *RPh* §138, MM 7:260).

More than any of the anecdotal cases in §408Z culled from the medical literature of his time, Hegel’s conception of the connection between individual derangement and world disorder finds an eloquent paragon in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*.<sup>34</sup> Citing Goethe’s appraisal (in *Wilhelm Meister’s Wanderjahre*) of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Hegel speaks of the Prince of Denmark as an individual gripped by the delusional conviction of being called to singlehandedly establish justice in an ethically dislocated world he no longer recognizes as his home: “The time is out of joint; O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!” (*Hamlet*, act 1, scene 5). Under the heading “*Die Handlung*” (Aesthetics, Part One) Hegel portrays Hamlet as entirely focused on his subjective feeling or “inward presentiment [*Ahnung*]” of reality. Persecutory delusion is Hamlet’s overarching perspective on reality: from the beginning, he is “behaving with the dark feeling that something monstrous must have happened” (MM 13:300), despite the absence of reasons for his suspicions (MM 14:207). After the revelation by his father’s ghost, Hegel comments, we would expect the prince to take immediate revenge. But Hamlet cannot act: he is

a beautiful soul pulled inward, . . . melancholy, gloomy, hypochondriac and brooding . . . just as . . . Goethe holds: “Here,” he says, “an oak tree is being planted in an exquisite vessel, which should have received in its bosom only lovely flowers; the roots expand, and the vessel disintegrates.” (MM 13:300)

Hamlet’s hesitancy is pathological: a catatonic inability to act. His *genius* is not up to the adversity of which he nonetheless deems himself the only cure.

Hegel’s entire interpretation is steeped in the concepts and vocabulary used to explicate madness in the Anthropology. The prince is a wistful wanderer going astray (*in die Irre*), unable to relate to what is present, sunk in himself, locked in unreality, and finally victim of dreadful errors (*Irrtümer*) of his own making. Other than in ancient tragedy, the central collision in Shakespeare’s piece is rooted in Hamlet himself, “whose soul . . . , full of revulsion for world and life . . . withers away through his

<sup>34</sup> Berthold-Bond 1995, 143–76, discusses in detail the correspondence between madness and tragic figures in Hegel’s work.

own hesitations and the external chaos of the circumstances” (MM 15:559). Hamlet’s intensifying derangement is synchronous with his ethical world’s objective disintegration. In the end, Hegel describes Hamlet’s character with the same words used in the *Anthropology* to describe “manic depression.”<sup>35</sup> Hamlet’s death may seem accidental, but death has been within him all along: “with such grief and softness, such sorrow, and such loathing of all life’s circumstances, he is . . . a lost man, . . . consumed by weariness within even before death approaches him from without” (MM 15:567).

Put in contemporary psychiatric terminology, Hegel’s Hamlet would suffer from a persecutory delusion combined with catatonic depression (see *DSM* 5, 97, and 105). But the difference between contemporary psychiatry’s etiology and Hegel’s is striking: for Hegel, Hamlet’s maladies would have been brought about by the ruin of his ethical world.

<sup>35</sup> Another nineteenth-century term currently in wide use: see *DSM* 5, 123.



## *Hegel's Account of Perceptual Experience in His Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*

*Markus Gabriel*

Human beings are endowed with epistemic capacities that put us in touch with how things are. Due to this very fact we are also prone to make mistakes. The exercise of our various capacities is, thus, subject to normative evaluation in epistemic terms. Accordingly, objectivity is a feature of our various epistemic capacities, namely, their truth-aptness in bouts of the game of giving and asking for reasons.

Perceptual experience naturally plays a central role in any account of the mental states we ascribe to each other and ourselves in light of our objective epistemic capacities. Evidently, it need not play the role accorded to it by the empiricist tradition according to which perceptual experience is the only or rather the paradigmatic resource of objective thought – thought evaluable with respect to the epistemic quality of its performance.

It is a fair assumption for any reading of Hegel's overall take on the objectivity of human thought that it is remote from any kind of empiricism. Despite various traditional readings, this implies a rejection of any form of generalized subjective *ontic idealism* in the sense of the view that reality consists exclusively of minds and mental states, let alone of a singular all-encompassing divine mind with its associated mental states.<sup>1</sup>

Hegel rejects the mainstream empiricist view that sense experience is the only source of objective knowledge. At the same time, he also rejects the weaker empiricist commitment prominent in Kant according to which perceptual knowledge, if not the only source of objectivity, is clearly its paradigm.

This raises two major questions concerning Hegel's account of human (finite) thought. First, what does it mean to not accord perceptual experience a paradigmatic role in a theory of epistemic capacities? Second, how ought we to make sense of Hegel's explicit account of the

<sup>1</sup> See Gabriel 2016. A clear example of the opposite reading of Hegel as an ontic idealist is provided by Horstmann 2006.

relationship between intuition, representation, and thinking in his mature psychology, contained in his *Encyclopaedia* philosophy of subjective spirit (*Enc.* §§445–69)?

There is a slowly increasing interest in Hegel's psychology (see deVries 1988; Halbig 2002; Rometsch 2007). One of the reasons for this interest is that Hegel there deals with various issues at the intersection of epistemology and philosophy of mind. The kind of renewed attention paid to Hegel's potential contribution to contemporary debates results from Pippin's, Brandom's, and McDowell's attempts to reconstruct elements of Hegelian thought in light of the question of how exactly a finite mind is in a position to acquire knowledge about the (external) world on the basis of its cognitive position (see Pippin 1989; Brandom 2002; McDowell 2013a).

Our cognitive situation in one way or another has an animal aspect. Qua thinking animals, we can only know anything about the actual denizens of the external world by somehow taking bits of it in via sensory channels. At the same time, there is a famous line of thought often traced back to Sellars's *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, but evidently present in the entire tradition of epistemology from Plato onward, according to which the *logical* relations constitutive of thought contents differ in principle from the *causal* relations holding between sensory stimuli. This is why it is part and parcel of the epistemological project to find a place both for a thorough distinction between *sensation* and *perception* and for an epistemically relevant way of linking the two.

In this context, McDowell has famously claimed that his views in *Mind and World* could be read "as a prolegomenon to a reading of the *Phenomenology*" (McDowell 1994, ix) and Rorty saw Brandom moving in the direction of a transition from analytic philosophy's *Kantian* stage to a *Hegelian* one (see Rorty 1997). In order to assess their claims on the basis of Hegel's most developed take on the philosophical issues at stake, the right text to look at, however, is the philosophy of subjective spirit and not the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as some commentators have already pointed out (see Halbig 2002; Rometsch 2007).

There is a recent exchange between Houlgate and McDowell which reveals a major exegetical and philosophical fault line (see Houlgate 2006 and 2016b; McDowell 2009). They agree in reading Hegel as some kind of a direct realist about perception. In this context, this means that they reject the idea that in addition to the object of perception and our mental state of perceiving, there is a further object (such as a sense datum) which "mediates" between mind and world. They rather believe that qua intuiting

intellects we are directly in touch with an external world. Thus, any actual token of perception is grounded in an intuition. For McDowell this comes with a rejection of most of the background assumptions underpinning Hegel's official version of a perceptual realism. As Halbig 2002 insists, according to Hegel, it takes philosophical work to show that perceptual realism is a tenable position. Hegel believes that common sense is easily convinced by accounts of perception that insert a "veil of perception" between the object and the subject of a perceptual mental state. On the level of philosophical methodology Hegel is not a quietist of the sort envisaged by McDowell, and this should be obvious from Hegel's account of the absolute method propounded in the *Science of Logic*. For Hegel, vindicating perceptual, direct realism requires a metaphysical detour that allows us to fully understand how the mind is part and parcel of any reality to which it can gain access.

In contrast, Houlgate reads Hegel's (metaphysical) background assumptions in such a way that they are grounded in an overall picture according to which finite minds somehow project a Hegelian category framework onto a two-dimensional sensory manifold initially represented by the mind as a color and shape plane. This plane is purportedly thereby transformed into the experience of a three-dimensional visual field by unnoticed mental processes. In one crucial respect, their dispute revolves around the precise relation between intuition, representation, and thought in perceptual episodes of the familiar kind.

In what follows, I will first sketch the meta-metaphysical terrain on which I locate Hegel. This is important, as I believe that Hegel's psychology is not engaged in the metaphysics of perceptual experience. However, this does not turn him into a quietist about metaphysics. In light of the move to a Hegelian meta-metaphysics, I will then discuss some details of both the concept of intuition and that of representation as presented in the psychology (*Enc.* §§446–64).

### Hegelian Meta-Metaphysics

Hegel is surprisingly deflationary about metaphysics in the following sense: any straightforward way of giving an account of the structure of reality as a whole, or of its fundamental nature, corresponds to an ultimately misguided account of the structure of finite thought. Here, "finite thought" refers to the notion that any actual thought episode designed to pick out and characterize how things are will be centered on a thinker of those thoughts. Any thinker of actual thoughts will think about things from her

standpoint. The facts together with the standpoint ought to be invoked in any explanation of the success or failure of a knowledge claim. Objective knowledge (knowledge about ontologically objective facts, i.e. facts whose obtaining is not a function of our taking them in) is subject to success conditions which are not (and cannot be) necessarily fulfilled. Otherwise, knowledge claims could not be held responsible (see Gabriel 2019b).

In order to make sense of this finitude, Hegel famously claims that we have to move beyond it, to the standpoint of the truly infinite (see Gabriel 2007). The true infinite does not amount to a commitment to the “God’s eye point of view” of metaphysics surveying reality as a whole. Rather, it consists in an attempt to give a complete account of ways of thinking about how finite thought can be seen as embedded in a larger whole. Yet the very structure of the series of these ways of thinking cannot be uncovered from the unaided standpoint of finitude. Claims to necessity and completeness, which are characteristic of Hegel’s own method of guaranteeing the closure of his system, significantly go beyond attempts to state how things are in the (external) world.

*Ways of thinking about how things are are not themselves part of objective reality.* However, this by no means implies that they are not real. It just means that they cannot be studied from the standpoint of what Hegel calls “nature” in his philosophy of nature. “Nature” and “spirit” are not two kinds of entities to be mentioned in a complete list of things of which the universe is composed. Rather, they are two broad categories of ways of thinking about what there is. This is why the *Encyclopaedia* contains the basic outlines (*Grundrisse*) of the philosophical sciences, including the philosophy of nature, and not an assemblage of empirical knowledge claims concerning the natural world “out there” and mental items “in here.” However, Houlgate’s and McDowell’s ways of dealing with the relationship between intuition and representation overlook the meta-metaphysical stance of the *Encyclopaedia* and interpret Hegel as addressing an issue in the metaphysics of mind head-on. They believe that Hegelian metaphysics is a straightforward account of perception and its relation to its objects.

Contemporary, so-called analytic metaphysics assumes that metaphysics deals with “the structure of the world,” “the furniture of reality,” the architecture of what there is, and the like.<sup>2</sup> This corresponds to what Hegel characterizes as “the first attitude of thought towards objectivity” (*Enc.* §§26–36). He calls this attitude “metaphysics” and distinguishes it

<sup>2</sup> See paradigmatically Sider 2013; van Inwagen 2015.

from two other attitudes. In what follows, I will refer to this attitude as a “first-order metaphysics.”

An attitude of thought toward objectivity is, roughly, a way of thinking about the objective purport of thought. Thoughts have truth-evaluable content. As a function of their content they are about something that need not itself be identical with a thought. The first attitude, or metaphysics, conceives of thought as directly engaging the structure of reality.

The first position is the naïve way of proceeding, which, being still unconscious of the antithesis of thinking within and against itself, contains the belief that truth is [re]cognised, and what the objects genuinely are is brought before consciousness, through thinking about them. In this belief, thinking goes straight to the objects; it reproduces the content of sense-experience and intuition out of itself, as a content of thought, and is satisfied with this as the truth. All philosophy in its beginnings, all of the sciences, even the daily doing and dealing of consciousness, lives in this belief. (*Enc.* §26)

Note that Hegel rejects this attitude.<sup>3</sup> Let us pin down the notion of a *first-order metaphysics* by identifying it with the discipline that tries to uncover highly general truths about what thought-independent reality is. Like physics, it uncovers structures that turn the universe into a cosmos, while unlike physics, its objects are generalities that cannot be accessed from the standpoint of natural science alone.<sup>4</sup>

Despite his overall criticism of first-order metaphysics, Hegel equally repudiates a prominent way of questioning the project of metaphysics in the paragraphs on the second attitude (*Enc.* §§37–60). *Empiricism* and Kant’s *critical philosophy*, which make up the second attitude, according to Hegel, rightly point out the contribution of thought to any account of thought-independent reality. Evidently, reality as a whole cannot exclusively consist of thought-independent reality. Otherwise, we could trivially make no sense whatsoever of thought’s objective purport. Hence, any metaphysical theory must be compatible with an insight into its own epistemological architecture. We cannot simply give an account of what there is without thereby committing to an account of that very activity. Yet this does not make the project of metaphysics as such futile. It only corrects the mistaken assumption that we can just write the book of

<sup>3</sup> In my view, Stern 2009a and Kreines 2015 make the mistake of reading Hegel’s enterprise in terms of a contribution to first-order metaphysics. For a reading similar to the one sketched in this essay, see Koch 2014.

<sup>4</sup> For such a conception of metaphysics, see the influential paper Fine 2012.

the world by using conceptual tools in order to cut reality at its most general joints.

In this respect, I agree with Pippin's proposal to think of Hegelian logic as "an account of all possible account-giving" (Pippin 2008, 13). Yet this aspect of Hegel's own attitude toward objectivity has an additional feature covered by neither the empiricist nor the Kantian critique of the very possibility of first-order metaphysics. This additional feature comes to the fore when we realize the indispensability of the right account of what there really is in light of the requirement that we be able to rationally justify our beliefs about its structure. Reality cannot substantially differ from how we grasp it in thought. It cannot generally be otherwise than the way a true thought represents it as being. This tells us something both about thought and about reality.

In connection with this feature, I have argued elsewhere that Hegel operates on two levels. On the second-order level of "a thinking of thinking" (*Enc.* §19R) he investigates the internal structure (coherence) of a given way of thinking about reality as a whole. On this level, ways of thinking are regarded as so many "definitions of the absolute" (*Enc.* §85). The dialectical procedure of ruling out inferior ways of processing reality in light of their internal coherence, however, has implications for Hegel's own account of reality as a whole. On the first-order level, nothing can be the case that makes it impossible in principle to guarantee that we are in epistemic and semantic touch with how things really are.

This is why Hegel's notorious identification of logic and metaphysics in *Enc.* §24 is neither a commitment to a deflationary metaphysics nor the instigation of a return to Aristotelian metaphysics.<sup>5</sup> Rather, I propose that we understand Hegel's meta-metaphysics as constrained by the idea of a transcendental ontology (see Gabriel 2011). *Transcendental ontology* deals with what there is in view of the fact that we are manifestly able to process it epistemically in various registers.

As we shall see in the next section in more detail, this is why the philosophy of subjective spirit proceeds in view of a well-defined goal

<sup>5</sup> Hence, I only partially agree with a deflationary reading such as the one recently proposed by Chong-Fuk Lau (2016). I disagree with his general proposal to see "Hegel's speculative philosophy itself as a second-order theory that explores the philosophical concepts necessary for traditional metaphysics. This meta-theoretical approach to meta-physics is reflected in Hegel's repeated emphasis on the identity of logic and metaphysics, which, however, has often been mistaken as a thesis on the 'metaphysicalization' of logic by inflation of logical categories with metaphysical content" (*ibid.*, 27). A whole-hearted deflationary reading along those lines is developed by Stekeler-Weithofer 1992; 2005; 2014.

(see Gabriel 2019a). The goal is to make sense of the fact that we know a priori (from the logic) that reality (actuality) cannot in principle differ from any mode of presentation designed to make it manifest to thinkers. What there is cannot be such that we are necessarily sealed off from it. I call this insight articulated by the *Science of Logic* the “principle of intelligibility” (Gabriel 2016). This principle is the center of Hegel’s absolute idealism, which is, indeed, not an ontic (first-order) claim about what there is, but a second-order thesis that constrains the coherence conditions for any specific definition of the absolute, i.e., for any given overall metaphysical picture of the architecture of reality as a whole.

Truth plays a crucial role in the *Science of Logic*, which serves as the foundation for the notion of a philosophical science (*Wissenschaft*) qua “the actual cognition of what, in truth, is” (*PhG*, *PS* ¶73/*GW* 9:53). It would lead us too far afield to delve into the details of Hegel’s theory of truth as it is presented in the *Science of Logic*. What is important, though, is that the Idea (*Enc.* §§213–44) is the paradigmatic case of truth in the sense of a correspondence of objectivity and concept.<sup>6</sup> “The Idea is what is *true in and for itself, the absolute unity of Concept and objectivity*” (*Enc.* §213). In the remark to this paragraph Hegel distinguishes between truth and correctness, where correctness is a correspondence of representation and external objects.

The Idea is the *Truth*; for truth means that objectivity corresponds with the Concept – not that external things correspond with my representations (representations of this kind are just *correct* representations held by *me as this* [individual]). (*Enc.* § 213R)

I suggest that Hegel is drawing on a version of the following line of thought. Cognition (*Erkenntnis*) does not count as a case of something that is true in virtue of the fact that my representations are in touch with external reality. This does not rule out that my representations can be correct in the sense of depicting an external world. The contrast I have in mind can be illustrated with recourse to the causal element in perceptual experience. If I indeed see a table in front of me and thereby come to believe that there is a table in front of me, there has to be a causal relationship holding between me and the table. Yet this fact cannot be accounted for by investigating perceptual experience piecemeal. We cannot inductively arrive at the justified true belief that perceptual experience involves among other things causal ties to a natural environment. Rather,

<sup>6</sup> On the concept of material truth at play here, see Stern 2009b.

we need to understand why the concept of perceptual experience is the concept of something that could not take place without obtaining the relevant causal ties.

Thus, we come to grasp a *conceptual* relationship between the concept of perceptual experience and the concept of causation. Otherwise put, when we come to know that perceptual experience involves causal ties, we do not infer this from a series of perceptual episodes. Instead, we understand that the very notion of perceptual experience is one which could not pick out a reality if it were not the case that perception and causation hang together in a way accessible to philosophical theorizing.

Thinking about thinking is not a free-floating investigation without ontological commitments. On the contrary, it is precisely an investigation into the ontological commitments of metaphysical theorizing. Remarkably, this two-tiered structure of theory-construction is made explicit in §6 of Quine's *Word and Object*, which deals with "Posits and Truth." Even though Quine goes on to draw very different conclusions from it, he there states an insight which can serve as a toy model for Hegel's understanding of the objective purport of the philosophical sciences in his sense.

Everything to which we concede existence is a posit from the standpoint of a description of the theory-building process, and simultaneously real from the standpoint of the theory that is being built. (Quine 1960, 22)<sup>7</sup>

Bracketing the claims of traditional metaphysics in the context of a "self-consummating skepticism" (*PhG*, *PS* ¶78/*GW* 9:56) is, thus, not tantamount to rejecting the very idea of objective purport and ontological commitment. As Quine puts it right before the quote: "To call a posit a posit is not to patronize it" (Quine 1960, 22). Semantic ascent to the level of theory-description need not rule out sustained ontological commitment that turns out to be ideally sustainable under maximal justificatory pressure derived from the encounter with sophisticated (Pyrrhonian) skepticism.<sup>8</sup>

Hegelian meta-metaphysics operates on two levels. First, it makes explicit the ontological commitment of a choice of concepts implicit in a theory. Second, it asks the question of whether the concept as articulated in a theory at hand is capable of capturing the objectivity necessary for the theory at hand to guarantee that it is in actual epistemic touch with the region of what there is that it purports to capture (be it in broader metaphysical strokes or in specific empirical detail).

<sup>7</sup> On the relationship of Quine and Hegel in general, see Franks 2007.

<sup>8</sup> On this, see Forster 1989.



A shape of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, a logical category in the *Science of Logic*, or an overall concept in the *Encyclopaedia* counts as a failure to the extent to which the role its fundamental concepts play in its own individuation does not correspond with how things have to be for the theory at hand to grasp itself as generally true. Sense-certainty, for instance, turns out not to be itself based on sensation. We cannot make sense of what it is to be in touch with mind-independent reality on the basis of an impoverished concept of sense-certainty alone. Yet we must not patronize the posit of sense-certainty; *mutatis mutandis* for the concept of intuition, as we shall see. There is sense-certainty, and there is intuition, but this does not mean that they play the role assigned to them by various theories locating them at the center of their epistemological enterprise.

As we approach the system itself canonically expressed in the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel relies on his mature version of dialectics or speculative philosophy. The mature version is endowed with a criterion for successful theory-construction derived from his earlier projects. This criterion itself is justified on the level of meta-metaphysics. It shows us how to continue when confronted with first-order metaphysical theories and the concepts they draw on in articulating their own success conditions. The dialectical procedure rules out the worry of arbitrariness by ordering first-order metaphysical theories with respect to the complexity of their conceptual frameworks.

The smallest unit of complexity is picked out by Hegel's vocabulary of immediacy. Sense-certainty, being, and the first attitude of thought to objectivity all share the idea that reality is disclosed to us, as we literally open our eyes (sense-certainty), start thinking (being), or start thinking about thinking (first attitude). However, reality cannot be conceived of as merely manifesting itself without any activity on our part, as this would undermine the notion that we can justify a claim when challenged. Where there is no room for a justified challenge, there is no room for a rational defense either. This is why immediacy does not meet the minimal standard of theory-construction, namely, our capacity to give an account of what we are doing in the actualization of our epistemic capacities.

### **Intuition and Representation in Hegel's Account of Perceptual Experience**

We can now approach the concepts of intuition and representation in light of the meta-metaphysics operative in the background of Hegel's take on perception. Intuition puts us in touch directly with how things are. Yet, theoretically articulated insight into this feature of human knowledge

acquisition requires a whole battery of concepts. The concept of intuition is insufficient with respect to the concept of knowledge. A full account of perceptual knowledge about our natural environment needs both a concept of representation and one of thinking in order to make sense of the fact that we never actually take in glimpses of the external world, but rather perceive how things are by being embedded in our perceptual environment as thinkers and actors.

A widespread way of phrasing the issue that separates conceptualism from non-conceptualism about perceptual experience draws on the phenomenon of cognitive penetration. Does the fact that we know something about our perceptual environment shape our perceptual experience and thereby change it (conceptualism) or do subjects knowledgeable about a certain domain of mesoscopic objects continue to merely take in information from the perceptual environment that they come to understand in a different way (non-conceptualism)? Otherwise put, what is the metaphysical relation between the various layers of the human mind which are typically ordered along an axis from fundamental sensory input to higher-order conceptual classification of observable reality into things such as cars, trees, people, castles? Do I have the same (kind of) perceptual experience when I look at a visual scene with a tree when I know that there is a tree as when I do not know this?

Before we can take a closer look at Hegel's account of the interplay of intuition, representation, and thinking in perceptual episodes, it is helpful to distinguish two lines of thought about this which are represented by Houlgate (2006) and McDowell (2009).

Houlgate presents Hegel's take on perceptual experience by combining elements from the anthropology and psychology sections in the *Encyclopaedia*. In this context, he takes some of the passages on sensation (*Empfindung*) verbatim, in the sense of a first-order metaphysical account of mental processes that structure the form and content of our perceptual experience. In a condensed passage he claims that Hegel believes that

[i]n sensation we take up directly the look, shape and texture of things, but nothing else that belongs to concrete experience is taken up in this way. The spatio-temporal continuum in which we experience things is projected by intuition; the general representations which underlie our empirical concepts are the product of our imagination; and the object-character or "thinginess" of things and the causal relations between them are posited by thought in its different forms. When we see a car going by, therefore, we do not actually see a car: we see colours that we understand and judge to be a car. (Houlgate 2006, 248f.)

According to this interpretation, we cannot see objects in the required sense of a direct contact with how things are. What we see instead are “colours and textures” (ibid., 246). Let us call this view *metaphysical projectivism*. It consists in a set of assumptions underpinning the thought that perceptual experience deals directly with a two-dimensional structure of surface irritations that is transformed into three-dimensional patterns by internal mental processes. Nowhere in this procedure will there be direct contact with how things are. All there is is direct contact with appearances that are presented to us in the form of sensation to be further processed by higher-order cognitive processes. Houlgate, therefore, reads Hegel’s statements about the concepts of intuition, perception, and representation as first-order metaphysical assertions about the operations of the human mind.

On this account, Hegel reveals himself as a non-conceptualist about intuition in that he would deny that there is cognitive penetration. Our perceptual experience is and forever remains a mechanism of projection from which we gain phenomenal consciousness. On this construal, there is no actual intentional consciousness in perceptual experience whose content would be directly in touch with how things are.

Strictly speaking, therefore, we do not see that things are thus and so; rather, in seeing we judge that things are thus and so. Nor is the fact that things are thus and so taken up in any other way. Colours and textures are indeed taken up directly from the world, but the idea “that this is something red” is not. It is posited in an unnoticed act of judgment. (Ibid., 246)

In order to make up for the various inconsistencies in the formulation of such a view – epitomized by the manifestly contradictory statement: “When we see a car going by, therefore, we do not actually see a car” – Houlgate adds that the metaphysical category apparatus of Hegelian logic is somehow present in the human mind such that it governs the mechanism of projection. In this way, he secures a kind of quasi-objectivity in that we can come to see “cars” after all by transforming colors and textures according to the rule-book of Hegelian logics into “cars.”

McDowell rightly objects to such a view that, among other things, it boils down to the kind of subjective idealism Hegel eagerly and explicitly rejects.<sup>9</sup> The overall worry McDowell highlights in Hegel’s dismissal of subjective idealism and empiricism alike is that no activity of concept formation or judgment would ever be in a position to put us in touch with objects and facts in our perceptual environment if we could not come to

<sup>9</sup> McDowell 2008, 231, explicitly charges Houlgate with maintaining such subjective idealism.

see that things are thus-and-so on the basis of our perceptual encounter with them. Yet if our perceptual encounter did not transcend the resources of sensation, as construed by empiricism and Houlgate's interpretation of Hegel, we could never make sense of the idea of perceptual experience as a ground of knowledge. All we could ever hope for would be a conceptual classification of sensory episodes into colors and textures. On this basis alone, we could never actually judge that things are such that a car is passing by, but would be mentally stuck in a two-dimensional data impressionism. Judgments could in principle not deal with cars and processes such as cars driving by. Houlgate could, of course, respond that we can judge that a car is passing by on the ground that there is an event in two-dimensional mental space. Yet it is precisely this which bars him from associating the right truth-conditions with the judgment that a car is passing by, namely, that there really is a car passing by.

Such a picture leaves room for all sorts of skeptical problems that Hegel addresses in his critique of empiricism and Kant (see Gabriel 2016). Against this, McDowell recommends a version of his view that the deliverances of sensibility in perceptual experience cannot be metaphysically separated from the exercise of our conceptual capacities. We do not take in colors and textures as though we have to interpret them in a second step. Rather, we directly take in how things are, which includes both objects like cars and events like cars driving by. Cars in perceptual experience fall under concepts such as ... *is a car* without there being a layer in mental reality that puts colors and textures together so that phenomenal bundles make it the case that ... *is a car* is not an empty concept.

McDowell draws a metaphysical conclusion from the idea that we cannot make sense of "unnoticed intellectual activity" (McDowell 2008, 229). For him, sensory content itself has a conceptual structure.<sup>10</sup> Both conceptualism and non-conceptualism are first-order metaphysical views about the furniture of the human mind regardless of McDowell's insistence on a quietist method. McDowell is, thus, a prime representative of a conceptualist reading of Hegel on perceptual experience, whereas Houlgate defends both a non-conceptualism about sensation and a conceptualism about perceptual experience as a whole, where the latter assumes the shape

<sup>10</sup> McDowell 2008, 228: "In a picture in which sensory content is already conceptually informed as soon as it is in the mind of a mature human being, what place is there for an isolable contribution to our mature human experience from our passive, receptive sensibility?" See, of course, the full picture in McDowell 1994 and 2013a.

of an unabashed imposition view.<sup>11</sup> It is, thus, ultimately unclear how Houlgate reconciles these two strands in his interpretation. The difficulty shows up in his recourse to a mysterious “intellectual activity” that is supposed to solve the problem by somehow bringing Hegelian logical categories to bear on the question of whether we see cars or color patches judged to be cars.

Houlgate and McDowell misconstrue both the philosophical and the exegetical issues at stake in an important respect. Hegel defends a perceptual realism according to which we come to know how things are in external natural reality on the basis of the interplay of our epistemic capacities. This interplay is not an intervention in psychological reality as if we aggregated or fused mental layers into a whole of perceptual experience. Rather, Hegel claims that knowledge drawing on perceptual experience is a reality *sui generis*. In accounting for perceptual episodes, we are entitled to invoke a battery of concepts organized by their explanatory function in our epistemological architecture.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Hegel refrains from any claim concerning the first-order metaphysics of perceptual tokens. He does not offer empirical theses concerning perceptual tokens such as that percepts are somehow infused by concepts. Rather, he shows the shortcomings of attempts to isolate concepts such as “intuition,” “representation,” or “sign-making fantasy” from their explanatory context. Accordingly, it does not make sense to ask for a mechanism of projection or the like in accounting for the relation between intuition and representation. For similar reasons, Hegel also refuses to regard perceptual episodes in mature human beings as conceptually informed in some such way that the analytical picture of a layer is replaced by a more holistic, synthetic model.

On the meta-metaphysical reading proposed here, Hegel does not engage in first-order metaphysics of the human mind at all when he analyses the *concepts* of intuition, representation, and thinking. Rather, he discusses modes of thinking about the human mind that fall short of a coherent account. For neither intuition, nor representation, nor thinking are sufficient for an understanding of perceptual experience. This is part of the explanation of why the psychology section culminates in a second part which deals with practical spirit (*praktischer Geist*) (*Enc.* §§469–82)

<sup>11</sup> The locus classicus for the discussion of impositivism in Kant and Hegel’s criticism thereof is, of course, Pippin 1989. See also McDowell 2013b.

<sup>12</sup> Hegel’s concept of subjective *Geist* is, thus, a theory of our mentalistic vocabulary designed from the stance of action-explanation, which is what objective spirit and the transition from theoretical to practical spirit makes explicit. For a similar account that explicitly draws on Hegel, see Gabriel 2017 and 2018b.

(see Rometsch 2007). Perceptual experience is not a kind of theory about what there is, drawing on non-theoretical material (sensory content). In the full picture, human perceptual experience is the activity of a rational animal capable of coming to know how things are in her natural (and social) environment thanks to the fact that she is epistemically and causally in touch with it (including her integration into reality as an agent). This is not a feature of mere human (be it intentional or phenomenal) *consciousness*. Consciousness alone cannot put us in touch with our natural environment, as Hegel argues in the anthropology and phenomenology sections of the philosophy of subjective spirit, which deal with phenomenal and intentional consciousness, respectively (see Gabriel 2019a).

Remarkably, Hegel explicitly rejects metaphysical projectivism on the basis of a much more thorough direct realist account of intuition than the one typically associated with Kant.

If we have said that what is sensed derives the form of what is spatial and temporal from the intuiting spirit, however, this statement must not be taken to mean that space and time are only *subjective* forms, which is what *Kant* wanted to make of them. The truth is that the things *in themselves* are spatial and temporal . . . Our intuiting spirit therefore bestows upon the determinations of sensation the honour of endowing them with the abstract form of space and time and so assimilating as well as making proper general objects of them. What happens here is in no respect what subjective idealism takes it to be, however, for we do not receive only the *subjective* mode of our determining to the exclusion of the object's own determinations. (*Enc.* 3P §448R)

This is Hegel's comment on his somewhat misleading statement in *Enc.* §448 that intuition projects the content of sensation into space and time.<sup>13</sup> What he means can only be grasped in the context of the argument in *Enc.* §§446–50. There are three aspects of the concept of intuition Hegel discusses there.

The first aspect corresponds to sensation. The problem of sensation is that it is the concept of something that belongs to a single individual. A sensation is a feeling in that we locate it in us and not in some other person's mind. The idea is familiar. Perceptual experience seems to have as a component a subjective visual field, which comprises everything I can

<sup>13</sup> The German original reads: "Die Intelligenz bestimmt hiemit den Inhalt der Empfindung als *außer sich Seiendes*, wirft ihn *in Raum und Zeit* hinaus, welches die *Formen* sind, worin sie anschauend ist" ("Intelligence thus defines the content of sensation as something that is out of itself, projects it into time and space, which are the forms in which it is intuitive").

currently be perceptually aware of. Yet the sense in which this field is subjective remains unclear. For there is a tendency to think of the possession condition of perceptual mental states in such a way that what is given to me in sensation numerically differs from what is given to you. My sensations then cannot be your sensations.

However, on that basis it would be impossible to put sensations to service in knowledge-acquisition concerning our environment. For simplicity's sake, let us call this "the objective world."<sup>14</sup> I could not know how things are in the objective world on the basis of my sensations if I could not know that they do not provide me with information about my subjective visual field alone. I therefore need the concept of an *objective* visual field, of something to be seen both by me and by others.

This corresponds to the second aspect of the concept of an intuition (*Enc.* §448). We have to think of sensory content as something external to us. This is what Hegel means by his apparent talk of projection. He actually uses the verb "*hinauswerfen*." This need not mean "to project." It has the literal meaning of throwing something out. That intuition throws out space and time means that we realize that space and time are precisely not in us. Space and time as forms of outer things cannot be in our mind. The way in which a subjective visual field is mine is not a function of a private inner Cartesian theater such that we have to wonder how it relates to an objective visual field.

This is why the *psychological* concept of an intuition differs from the *anthropological* notion of subjective sensation. The former does not build on, but replaces it by a concept closer to the truth. In order for there to be intuition, we need not rely on subjective sensation at all. What it is for a perceptual experience to be someone's experience is for it to be appropriately related to a visual scene. Intuition is, therefore, the concept of a selection-function and not the concept of the construction or production of its objects. We produce neither the objects nor the contents of intuition. Rather, we actually find them as something not produced by us, but as taken in from our specific standpoint in space and time.

When intelligence reaches a concrete unity of the two factors, that is to say, when it is at once self-collected in this externally existing material, and yet in this self-collectedness sunk in the out-of-selfness, it is *Intuition*. (*Enc.* §449, translation modified)

<sup>14</sup> Hegel uses this term in *Enc.* §402Z, §406R. He frequently uses the term "external world [*Außenwelt*]," too.

An intuitive selection-function is a function mapping from what exists in our environment onto an epistemic mental state. We invoke intuitions in the context of an explanation of how it is possible for us to take in bits of external reality in a reliable (and, therefore, fallible) way. Reliability (and fallibility) cannot be accounted for by reference to external reality alone.

At this point, Hegel adds "*Erinnerung*" to his conceptual repertoire. *Er-Innerung* is his technical term for an inner, internal component of a mental state which accounts for its being someone's state. Hegel makes this more explicit in *Enc.* §450 where he emphasizes that the concept of an intuition is the concept of someone's mental state, which he calls "its own [*das Ihrige*]." In a sense not yet articulated at this specific stage of the argument, the selection-function of a token-intuition is going to be a concept, which means that intuitions are conceptual. However, this is not tantamount to a conceptualist commitment. The point is much more minimal. All that Hegel is saying is that in order for there to be a concept of intuition (and not just a bunch of token mental states roughly picked out by the term "intuition"), we must be in a position to give an account of why we need such a concept. The *raison d'être* of the concept of intuition in the epistemological portfolio articulated in the philosophy of subjective spirit is that we need a *buffer property*.<sup>15</sup> A buffer property serves the explanatory function of making sense of the very objectivity of a mental state contributing to our epistemic standing with respect to what there is. Objectivity comprises both reliability and fallibility.<sup>16</sup> Intuitions are about something without thereby just occurring within external reality. They differ from mere sensory hits by having objective purport. In this minimal sense, for every token intuition there is a concept (a selection-function) such that the intuition is about this rather than some other thing or element in a scene.

Yet this does not get us very far. For now, one might justifiably want to know if there is a general structure of the buffer property in question. If there were not, it would be hard to figure out how intuitions could ever contribute to knowledge. The concept of an intuition is, thus, not elaborate enough. It states only that we are directly in touch with what there is without telling us anything about how this feat is performed.

<sup>15</sup> I borrow the notion of a "buffer property" from a seminar on Frege conducted by Charles Travis at the International Centre for Philosophy at Bonn in the summer of 2017. In this context, he introduced it in order to account for the intensionality of concepts in Frege designed to draw a wedge between the (false) idea of a predicate as naming things that fall under the concept it expresses and the (right) idea of a concept as providing us with a mode of thinking about objects within its range.

<sup>16</sup> For more on objectivity in Hegel's account of intentionality, see my Gabriel 2018a.



This is why Hegel moves to representation. The concept of a representation is the concept of a structure that mediates between the inner and outer component of an intuition. It is “the middle” (*Enc.* §451). This mediation between external reality and the inner component of our perceptual intake explains why a perceptual episode that in some sense occurs within us can actually be about something that clearly does not occur within us.

In *Enc.* §451 Hegel points out the decisive weakness in the concept of a representation. In order to grasp this, remember that representations are introduced in order to reply to the worry that intuitions draw on selection-functions specifically tailored to individual cases so that we can never arrive at any general knowledge of what there is on their basis alone. We, thus, need room for generality in perceptual experience.

The first shot is to think of representations as “*syntheses*” (*Enc.* §451). This corresponds to a line of thought familiar from the empiricist tradition: it introduces generality into perceptual experience by thinking of it as an association of various intuitions. If I immediately look at a cup to my left and another one to my right, I can come to see that both are cups by holding them together. There seems to be a corresponding mental act doing the trick.<sup>17</sup>

At this point, two new problems surface that have to be addressed. These problems eventually push us beyond the concept of a representation into the realm of thinking.

The first problem is the problem of memory. In order for me to establish generality on the basis of putting intuitions together, I have to keep an earlier intuition in mind. For instance, I turn my head to the left in order to induce an intuition of a cup. Now I turn it right and I take in another cup. As I move my head, I need to keep the earlier intuition in mind in order to compare it with the one I am now having so as to think of them as hanging together. But how exactly do I store an earlier intuition? Not by having an actual image of the past in my mind. The role of the image is to account for the generality arrived at by comparing various token intuitions. Therefore, it cannot also do the job of storing intuitions by holding onto them in the format of an image.

The second problem concerns “the reference of the image to an intuition – and that as a subsumption of the immediate single intuition

<sup>17</sup> That Hegel indeed has empiricism in mind can be grasped from *Enc.* §§452–54 where he develops the notion of representation as an image. His distinction between an intuition and an image corresponds to the Humean distinction between an impression and an idea.

under what is in point of form universal, under the representation with the same content" (*Enc.* §454, translation slightly altered). How does a mental image ever get in touch with an intuition? If the image is more general than the intuition, their relation has to be that of subsumption. But how can an intuition fall under an image? An image might represent an intuition. But representing something is not the same as having it fall under a concept.

For this reason, we have to introduce a genuine notion of content, the idea of a representation of something as something, i.e., as being a certain way. Here things get so tricky that it would take a book-length discussion to spell out in sufficient detail how Hegel derives the role of language from an account of imagination in *Enc.* §§455–64. However, it is possible to provide an outline of the argument that helps us to shed further light on the way in which we should read the text.

Roughly, the idea is that we can equip mental states with representational content only if we can think of the image-like components of perceptual experience in terms of "signs" with a "meaning" (cf. *Enc.* §458). The representational content of perceptual experience puts us in touch with things being a certain way because there is, as it were, a language of perceptual thought. Intuited items hang together in such a way that intuitions present us with something that is not a mental state.

[I]ntuition does not count positively or as representing itself, but as representing *something else*. It is an image, which has received an *independent* representation of the intelligence qua soul within itself, its *meaning*. This intuition is the *sign*. (*Enc.* 3 §458, translation modified)

On this basis, Hegel introduces the concept of a singular term which he calls a "name." Names immediately refer to the things named via an intuition. They play the role that intuitions play in our mental economy on the level of articulated thought. This works because we can come to understand that an intuition can be about something that is not itself an intuition in an epistemically relevant context. In any such context, we have to be in a position to identify the intuition in addition to its object. This is the function of the name. It identifies an intuition as an intuition of something.

However, it would again not get us very far if we thought of the representational content of perceptual experience as a mere aggregate of names. The names have to hang together too so that we can establish logical relations that underpin the generality requirement. A name qua "connection of the intuition produced by intelligence with its meaning" (*Enc.* §460) cannot be detached from its bearer. Not all singular terms are

proper names essentially tied to their bearer. But this becomes transparent only once we are equipped with the idea of a predicate satisfying a minimal generality constraint.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, we can draw a distinction between the fact that we use a certain term, on the one hand, and the worldly objects and facts it picks out via an intuition, on the other hand. In *Enc.* §463, Hegel accordingly introduces the notion of a “link [*Band*]” connecting a series of names regardless of their actual referents. The connection between terms, i.e., mental representation, cannot be reduced to a further mental state. I take it that Hegel’s thought can be supported by the following reasoning.

Take a perceptual, demonstrative judgment of the form: *That a is F*. As a perceptual judgment it is grounded in an intuition which puts the thinker in touch with *that a*. There is a demonstrative element in the perceptual thought itself. Yet this element does not explain the generality achieved by the thought *That a is F*. If we only had demonstrative resources, we could at most point to *that a* and to *that F* without having any clue how they hang together. The fact is that the thought “that a is F” does not consist of “that a” and “that F” and a relation holding between them that we can point out in addition to *that a* and *that F*. The perceptual thought is not a set of the form {that a, that relation, that F}. Otherwise, we would be confronted with a crude version of the problem of the unity of the proposition. The lesson to be drawn from the debate concerning the unity of the proposition is that no mental machinery can overcome the impasse of how these elements of a perceptual judgment hang together. The unity of a perceptually available proposition is the unity of a thought. The unity of a thought is governed by logical and not by psychological parameters.

## Conclusion

Intuition and representation are concepts that play a specific role in the philosophy of subjective spirit in light of its goal. The overall goal of this section of the *Encyclopaedia* is to give an account of how humans qua finite (animal) thinkers are in epistemic touch with the external world. The concepts under discussion are ordered in view of their respective contribution to knowledge of the external world. Intuition, representation,

<sup>18</sup> Strawson 2005, 99: “The idea of a predicate is correlative with that of a range of distinguishable individuals of which the predicate can be significantly, though not necessarily truly, affirmed.” This is elaborated by Evans (1982, 100–105).

imagination, etc. are introduced in the context of providing an account of objective cognition.

On the level of the methodology we witness a continual oscillation between object level and second-order level (posit and theory-construction) which is guided by the previous conclusions of the *Encyclopaedia*, especially the supreme conclusion of the logic – the principle of intelligibility, according to which reality is not in principle beyond the ken of human inquisitiveness. A given posit picks out a genuine phenomenon (there is sensation, intuition, etc.), but when we unpack it at the higher-order level we see that it does not have the self-standing resources to provide an account of objective cognition by itself, and for that very reason, cannot give a full account of itself qua epistemic state. This then requires the positing of another capacity, and so on, ad infinitum. We ought not to take all the posits together in either an analytic/aggregative or synthetic/holistic unity as though this gives us a metaphysical model of the mind's workings. This is to fail to note the oscillation between the levels or to collapse them together.<sup>19</sup>

The method employed by Hegel rules out that he is operating on the level of first-order metaphysics alone. Instead, he unfailingly maintains the third attitude of thought toward objectivity throughout his entire philosophy of spirit. This means that we should not expect from Hegel a straightforward answer to questions pertaining to the metaphysics of mind. However, this is not a shortcoming on Hegel's end, but rather a consequence of his methodology. For Hegel's methodology dissolves the premises that usually lead to the formulation of the questions underpinning a first-order account of mind's place in nature. His meta-metaphysics is a commitment to the notion that any successful philosophical theory-construction will have to have a firm grip on the pre-theoretical reality of human perceptual experience and agency as well as on the fact that pre-theoretical perceptual experience can play a role in epistemology only if our concept-formation is not flawed. Hegel's original contribution to contemporary issues at the intersection of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of language is yet to be fully explored. In this essay, I tried to sketch some arguments designed to bring out the originality of that very approach.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Thanks to Alex Englander for recommending the clarifications and formulations contained in this paragraph.

<sup>20</sup> Many thanks to Jim Bahoh, Alex Englander, Marin Geier, Mariya Halvazhieva, Jens Pier, and Jens Rometsch for discussions of earlier drafts of this essay.



PART III

*Philosophy of Objective Spirit*



*The Idea of a Speculative Philosophy of  
Objective Spirit*

*Christian Krijnen*

**Freedom: From the Alpha to the Omega of Philosophy**

*Freedom* is the core topic of modern philosophy. When it is viewed as a philosophical epoch, a new perspective arises concerning how humans conceive of themselves and their relationship to the world. Then human thought and action are no longer held to be determined by external factors (heteronomy) but are held to be self-determined (autonomy), and hence freed from external factors functioning as grounds for their determination. The philosophical paradigm for mastering this impetus of freedom is reason. With his “Copernican,” that is to say, his transcendental turn, Kant gave reason a form that suits the modern understanding of humans as self-determined agents. Reason transpires to be the source of all validity, and hence of any normativity of human thought and action. Objectivity, of whatever type, is from the start framed by the conditions of reason, or as it is also called in the discourse, of “subjectivity.”

On the one hand, philosophers like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel hailed Kant’s transcendental revolution of philosophy and his conception of reason as the source of validity for human thought and action. On the other hand, the German idealists were also convinced that Kant’s transcendental philosophy lacked the proper methodical and systemic form to do justice to the claim, that reason is the source of validity for human thought and action, of Kant’s critical project. Reinhold, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel were all of the opinion that Kant’s transcendental turn unleashed a revolution in philosophy that should not so much be stopped but completed. It should be completed by critically addressing the presuppositions or “foundations” of Kant’s philosophy itself.

To these presuppositions belongs, without doubt, Kant’s architectonic of reason in general as well as the particular role of the concept of



freedom.<sup>1</sup> Kant divides philosophy into theoretical and practical philosophy as well as into nature and freedom (which are the objects of theoretical and practical philosophy, respectively), or theoretical knowledge and determination of the will, or philosophy of nature and moral philosophy (as “practical legislation of reason according to the concept of freedom”) (*CJ*, *Ak* 5:171).<sup>2</sup> Against the background of this dualistic conception, it was significant for the German idealists to formulate a general concept of freedom: a concept of freedom that establishes a pervasive relationship and, hence, is able to function as the grounds for the unity of any specification of freedom. Freedom already plays an essential role within theoretical philosophy, since freedom as self-determination turns out to be a necessary condition for possible knowledge of objects. To put it more generally, freedom belongs to the determinacy of any activity of reason. Therefore, Kant’s architectonic was doomed to insufficiency. Whereas for Kant, practical is “everything possible through freedom,” for the German idealists, everything possible through freedom is rational (*vernünftig*). Whereas for Kant, the concept of freedom is the “*capstone*” (*CPrR*, *Ak* 5:3) of the whole system of pure reason, for the German idealists, freedom transforms into the *origin* of all philosophy and being. Whereas Kant’s conception of freedom offers a subsequent, not an original unity of the system, of theoretical and practical reason, nature and freedom, the post-Kantian idealists transform Kant’s dualistic conception of transcendental philosophy into a monism of reason as a monism of freedom. Knowledge, of whatever issues, is itself an eminent act of freedom.

From the very beginning, the adventure of exploring Kant’s presuppositions gave wings to the development of German idealist philosophy. The unity of reason was then to be conceived of as freedom. Fichte, as early as 1795, qualified, with revolutionary pathos, his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) as “the first system of freedom” (*GA* III/2, 298). His system is supposed to be “from first to last only an analysis of the concept of freedom” (*GA* III/4, 182). Inspired by Fichte, Schelling wrote to Hegel, in 1795, the no less programmatic statement that “the highest principle of all philosophy” is the absolute I, that is, the I which is not yet determined by “objects” but only “posed by *freedom*. The alpha and omega of philosophy is freedom” (*Briefe* I, 22). Hegel is not only committed programmatically to freedom;

<sup>1</sup> On Kant’s dualistic conception, see, for instance, Krijnen 2011; 2016b.

<sup>2</sup> All translations from foreign texts into English are mine, although I have benefited from consulting current translations. I always refer to the German edition of Kant’s and Hegel’s texts.

rather, as it seems in the most radical fashion, he tried to conceive of reason and freedom as a unity from which everything else emerges and can be comprehended. For Hegel, freedom makes up the beginning, the way, and the end of philosophy.

Therefore, considering the contemporary revival of Hegel in the debate on “recognition,” one must welcome the effort of Hegel scholars such as Klaus Vieweg in his voluminous study *Das Denken der Freiheit* to emphasize the role of the *Logic* for Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*. He not only points out that freedom is a fundamental determinacy of the “idea” (Vieweg 2012, 43ff.) but also stresses that the determinations of the “concept” itself (universality, particularity, and singularity) are decisive for Hegel’s conception of free will (Vieweg 2012, 57ff.). As said, this reference to the *Logic*, and with that to the system of philosophy, is indeed highly important in order to comprehend freedom.

By contrast, a thinker like Axel Honneth dislikes Hegel’s view that philosophy and its disciplines should be determined within the framework of a “system” of philosophy, granting the *Logic* even a foundational and guiding role for a contemporary philosophy of recognition. Honneth dismisses it as “metaphysical” (cf., e.g., Honneth 1994; 2001; 2010). According to Honneth, Hegel’s philosophy of right, for “methodological” reasons, fails because it rests on his logic, which purportedly is fully unintelligible to us due to its “ontological” concept of spirit (Honneth 2001, 12ff.). However, a vague reference to the “theoretical and normative conditions of the present age” (Honneth 2001, 13f.) hardly suffices for such a far-reaching estimate of Hegel’s logic. On the contrary, any interpretation of Hegel’s concept of objective spirit that neglects its relationship with Hegel’s system of philosophy also neglects essential determinations of Hegel’s concept of philosophy. Whereas for Honneth the “proper substance” of Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* can be provided by an account of objective spirit without reference to Hegel’s system of philosophy (Honneth 2001, 14f.), Hegel himself understands his *Philosophy of Right* as an elaboration of his Philosophy of Objective Spirit, and hence of the system of philosophy (*Enc.* §487R, cf. §§483–552; *RPh* §2).<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, he also notes that the *Philosophy of Right* borrows its method from the *Logic*

<sup>3</sup> Embedding the *Philosophy of Right* in the system of philosophy, and thus connecting it to the *Logic* and the Philosophy of Spirit, leads to an interpretation that also opposes a reading of Hegel according to which in the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel establishes his conception of freedom on the “basis of an intuitive dialectic beginning from an ordinary concept of practical freedom” (Bristow 2013, 372, cf. 373).

(*RPh* §§2R and 31).<sup>4</sup> The *Logic* plays a fundamental role for the *Philosophy of Right*, as such and concerning its specific content. The elaboration of the *Philosophy of Right* follows the developmental process of self-knowledge of the absolute idea as absolute spirit.<sup>5</sup> In accordance with the logic of a speculative development of concepts, the beginning of the philosophy of objective spirit must concern a concept of spirit that is maximally extrinsic to the concept attained by subjective spirit: “right” (*Recht, ius*, justice).<sup>6</sup> Hegel overcomes the outwardness of the idea within objective spirit by realizing (*realisieren*) this concept of right: that is, by making explicit the abstract generality of that concept as the beginning of series of meanings (cf. *WL*, *GW* 12:239ff. and 33f.).<sup>7</sup>

Nonetheless, in a certain respect, even Vieweg underestimates the relevance of Hegel’s *Logic* for the *Philosophy of Right*. Vieweg does not discuss the speculative *concept* as the origin of freedom. He holds the view

<sup>4</sup> Generally, Hegel’s two philosophies of reality regard their object as necessarily conforming to the “self-determination of the concept” (*Enc.* §246).

<sup>5</sup> Hence, as a spirit that has *not* been reached within the philosophy of objective spirit. Objective spirit is a *finite* spirit, that is to say, not a cognitive *self*-relation. Only in absolute spirit is a figure of knowledge reached “in which knowing reason [is] free for itself” (*Enc.* §52). The concept of spirit, and hence, also the concept of the absolute idea, is actualized not before the concept of absolute spirit. Cobben (2009, 137, cf. 143) is surprised that regarding absolute spirit there is a considerable difference between Hegel’s *Phenomenology* and his *Philosophy of Right* as in the latter, absolute spirit plays no role on the level of social institutions. This absence of the absolute spirit, however, fits well into Hegel’s program of philosophy as self-knowledge of the absolute idea as absolute spirit: it results from the function absolute spirit has within Hegel’s system of philosophy. That is why – *pace* Cobben – Hegel does not conceive of right and morality as “*objective and absolute spirit*” (*ibid.*, 148). Right and morality are both figures of objective spirit because they are, unlike absolute spirit, not forms of self-knowledge of spirit as spirit. For Cobben (*ibid.*, 8, cf. chs. 7–9), the “logical structure” of the *Philosophy of Right* cannot be understood without considering Hegel’s intention to connect the epochs of European history with corresponding forms of the self. In his *Encyclopaedia*, however, Hegel himself takes a different track. Whereas for Cobben the *Philosophy of Right* is to be understood as an elaboration of the rationality developed in the *Phenomenology* (*ibid.*, 116), within Hegel’s system of philosophy the *Philosophy of Right* is an objectification of free spirit, that is, of the final stage of subjective spirit. Here, Hegel shows that and how spirit can be a knowing spirit, both theoretically and practically. Spirit must be a free spirit, a spirit that “knows” and “wants” itself as free (*Enc.* §482). Such a spirit is autonomous in the sense that it can determine itself. It is free, yet, pre-social and pre-individual, as sociality and individuality (of subjects) play no role prior to the philosophy of objective spirit.

<sup>6</sup> More precisely, abstract right as the *existence (Dasein) of freedom* in the form of possession. According to Hegel’s concept of right, the concept of right, as existence of the free will that has freedom as its “inner determination and goal,” must be actualized in an “external pre-given objectivity,” so that the concept is perfected as “idea” (*Enc.* §§483f.). At the beginning of this process, the subjectivity of free spirit does not manifest itself in a free spirit but in an external matter (*äußerlichen Sache*) in which “I” put my “will” (*Enc.* §§488f.). Cf. Krijnen 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Against this background of Hegel’s conception of philosophical justification, the justificatory status of “social pathologies,” extremely important to Honneth (2001, 16f., 49ff.; 2008), is just as problematic as Honneth’s conception of philosophical foundations of reality. On Hegel and contemporary philosophy of recognition, see also Krijnen 2014; 2017.

that the predicate “free” applies only to the will: freedom can be thought “only within the paradigm of the will”; it is not before the *Philosophy of Right* that Hegel “makes explicit and proves” that freedom is an “immanent determinacy of the idea” (Vieweg 2012, 44). Hegel, by contrast, seems to have a different view: “the concept is that which is *free*” (*Enc.* §160, cf. *WL, GW* 12:15f.). And to be sure, that and how the concept is that which is free results from an “immanent deduction,” which is the “genesis of the concept” (*Enc.* §160 and *WL, GW* 12:16; 12). If we take this idea, and hence the structure of Hegel’s system, seriously, then it turns out that the widespread practice to understand Hegel’s doctrine of objective spirit as “practical” philosophy fails. Indeed, “Hegel’s practical philosophy” functions, in various permutations, as a popular book title.<sup>8</sup> Yet Hegel’s philosophy of objective spirit is not “practical” philosophy. In contrast to the “practical” reading, Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* conceives of philosophy as a philosophy of the *idea*, and conceives of spirit in its objective dimension not as practical but as *free* spirit, embedding the distinction between theoretical and practical in a new, more fundamental constellation of philosophy of spirit. It is essential to Hegel’s mature philosophy (both in the logic and in his philosophy of spirit) to sublimate the traditional, pervasive, and influential distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy as well as between the theoretical and the practical. Neglecting this continually misleads scholars toward abandoning Hegel’s arguments, the structure of the system of philosophy, and, by consequence, determinations of the relevant matter under consideration (cf. Krijnen 2014; 2016a).<sup>9</sup>

Hegel’s conception of freedom and its relevance for the philosophy of spirit, therefore, are even more complex than already presented by Vieweg. Freedom is neither primarily nor mostly conceivable as “practical.” Instead, for Hegel, the concept, and hence the logical, is that which is free. Moreover, it is that which is originally and exemplarily free. Taking Hegel’s doctrine of freedom as practical philosophy misses the decisive punchline. As a consequence, such an interpretation loses sight of Hegel’s subtle and complex conception of freedom in general and the characteristic form it obtains in the philosophy of objective spirit, reaching from abstract

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Rózsa 2005; Pippin 2008; or Siep 2010. As for many others, for Honneth (2001, 17f., 41) too Hegel’s philosophy of objective spirit is “practical philosophy.”

<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately, Knappik 2013, in the sections after on his interesting elaborations on Hegel’s *Logic*, follows the *comme il faut* of the present discourse to an extent that his thoughts on “Hegel’s metaphysics of spirit” (Knappik 2013, ch. 6) and “Practical freedom” (Knappik 2013, ch. 8), despite many fruitful insights, do not seem to be sufficiently based on Hegel’s texts.

right to *Sittlichkeit* as the facticity of freedom.<sup>10</sup> Without relating it to the logic and Hegel's system of philosophy, the philosophy of objective spirit cannot be understood properly, let alone evaluated in regard to its systematic relevance – at least if the complexity of Hegel's argumentation is taken into account. Attempts at an “actualization” of Hegel, which do not do justice to this complexity, would fail because of Hegel himself, despite the numerous advantages such attempts might have compared with contemporary non-Hegelian philosophies.

### The Concept as the Logical Foundation of Freedom

Hegel takes Kant's claim of the “self-knowledge” of reason (*CPR*, A XI), formulated with regard to metaphysics, extremely seriously, forcing him to overcome, both in the logic and in the philosophy of spirit, Kant's architectonic of reason. Kant's architectonic is based on the distinction between theoretical and practical. In order to develop his concept of philosophy as a speculative doctrine of the *absolute* idea, Hegel was forced to sublate the restrictions of both theoretical knowledge within the idea of the truth and practical knowledge within the idea of the good (*WL*, *GW* 12:192ff.). Additionally, he had to sublate the opposition between theoretical and practical operations of spirit into a doctrine of free spirit (*Enc.* §§445ff.). The terminus of Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit and starting point of his philosophy of objective spirit is indeed *free* spirit as a unity of theoretical *and* practical spirit. Before treating his conception of “idea,” however, Hegel determines the concept of the concept – as freedom.<sup>11</sup> As the logic, having “comprehending thought” as its subject matter (*WL*, *GW* 21:27), divides itself into a logic of being as being-in-itself of the concept, a logic of essence as being-for-itself of the concept, and a logic of concept as being-in-and-for-itself of the concept (cf. *Enc.* §§83, 84, and 112; *WL*, *GW* 21:17, 34, 44f., 272, etc.), self-knowledge of reason boils down to knowing reason as freedom. In the course of this effort, Hegel arrives at a conception of that which is originally free,

<sup>10</sup> Considered from the perspective of the matter at issue, the proper translation of Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* is not “ethical life,” as is the standard translation. *Sittlichkeit* concerns the actuality of freedom and, hence, the *facticity* of freedom (on this, see Krijnen 2019). In order to prevent confusion, I shall use the German term.

<sup>11</sup> The logical foundation of Hegel's doctrine of freedom has only recently come under the attention of scholars. Compare, for instance, the essays in Simon (1977) with Pierini (2006), Knappik (2013), and Krijnen (2016a). It is telling that in Hindrichs and Honneth (2013), Hegel's logical foundation of freedom does not play a significant role. Apparently, the insightful work of Fulda on freedom in Hegel has been neglected for too long (1996; 2007; 2011; 2014).

different from the one held by Kant, Fichte, Schelling, or later transcendental philosophers. These thinkers conceive of original freedom in terms of a practical subject, an I, (self-)consciousness, or a value or norm-related activity of a subject. By contrast, the *concept* turns out to be the eminent and fundamental form of being with itself in its other, which is Hegel's determination of freedom.

Put in reference to the programmatic formulation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the concept of substance – the latter being of great importance in Hegel's transition to the concept of the concept as that which is free – in freeing itself, the “substance” must not only become the “subject” (*PhG*, *GW* 9:18). Hegel's analysis of the concept of substance shows that it is the substance that utterly “*has been let go freely into the concept*,” and as Hegel adds, this completion of the substance is no longer the substance itself but “the *concept*, the *subject*” (*WL*, *GW* 12:14). On the whole, a philosophical program that is subjected to “*immanent deduction*” (*WL*, *GW* 12:16) is a philosophical program in which the concept in a radical and encompassing way *frees itself to itself*. As a logic of the concept that frees itself to itself in the fashion of self-knowledge, the logic is a logic of the (absolute) *idea*, that is to say, a logic of the concept that corresponds to itself in its objectivity: a logic of the “*adequate concept*” (*WL*, *GW* 12:30). This is a logic that evolves itself through an immanent process of determination, beginning with thought as the indeterminate immediate (“being,” *Sein*) and completing this evolution by comprehending its own evolution (“absolute idea”). Viewed in this light, the absolute idea contains all determinacy within itself (*WL*, *GW* 12:236).

Containing all determinacy in itself, the idea is not exhausted merely as a logical idea. Taking the whole of philosophy into account, the absolute idea is addressed by Hegel in three perspectives of determination: within pure thought, within nature, and within spirit (cf. Krijnen 2008, ch. 4.2.1.2). Hence, Hegel's philosophical program includes nature and spirit, that is to say, the realms of reality; his philosophy includes them in the way of an immanent development of the idea which acknowledges “experience.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the logic functions as the “foundation” of any natural or spiritual determination (*WL*, *GW* 12:20; cf. *Enc.* §24A1). Hegel

<sup>12</sup> Immanent development is meant here as a methodological qualification. As far as the content is concerned, speculative idealism, according to its self-understanding, is committed to the “fruitful bathos of experience” (Kant). Hegel leaves neither the empirical dimension nor the history of philosophy aside: he acknowledges empirical and philosophical knowledge as material, but he (trans)forms this material to conform with the knowledge claim of his speculative philosophy and the methodology belonging to it (cf. Krijnen 2008, 190ff.).

denotes the logic in his perspective also as the “pure figure” (*reine Gestalt*) of the “intellectual view of the universe” (*WL, GW 21:34*) as well as the “inner figurator” (*inneren Bildner*) and “pre-figurator” (*Vorbildner: WL, GW 12:25*) of his philosophy of reality (*Realphilosophie*). Because of its radical foundational role, the logic is qualified as both the “first” and the “last” science of the system of philosophy (*WL, GW 12:198*). This implies, inter alia, that each and every determination – whether empirical determinations or philosophical determinations of nature and spirit constituting the foundations of the empirical – has its basis in logic, while at the same time the logic is retained in the other realms of the philosophical system as their foundation. Finally, at the end of the system, the logic becomes a logic that *comprehends itself* as a logic that is the unity of nature and spirit, and, therefore, is the grounding principle of reality. By reaching this insight, philosophy – a figure (*Gestalt*) of the absolute spirit – comprehends itself as truly a science of foundations, or conversely, as truly a science of totality.<sup>13</sup>

In short, the *program* of a veracious idealist philosophy is profiled in conformity with the concept that is and remains with itself in its other. Hegel’s speculative determination of the concept thereby integrates notions like spontaneity, self-determination, necessity, contingency, law, cause, effect, universality, and singularity in a complicated way and in doing so enables first something like spiritual freedom.

Concerning the execution of this program, the *concept* transpires to be the logical place in the system of the absolute idea – the one and only theme of philosophy – *as* that which is free. With the transition from the section Actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) to the Doctrine of the Concept, Hegel deduces the concept of the concept and the freedom that characterizes it. “The concept is that which is *free*” (*Enc. §160*), freedom is the “absolute negativity of the concept as identity with itself” (*Enc. §382*).

Hegel comes to this insight by comprehending Kant’s cosmological concept of freedom and Spinoza’s concept of substance from their common origin, that is, the concept as that which is free. Kant, however,

<sup>13</sup> For the logic as the last science, see Krijnen (2008, ch. 4.2.3, esp. pp. 228ff.). The absolute spirit is, however, not just “the spirit which *knows* that it has to appear in the finite life that Hegel conceives of as *world history*” (Kok 2013, ch. 6.8.3). This type of “transcendental openness” does not cover Hegel’s mature concept of absolute spirit. Absolute spirit entails a specific closure of spirit too. Hegel thinks openness and closure together in such a way that this unity is not only a “unity of spirit and nature” but a unity of the idea, nature, and spirit. From the perspective of the history of philosophy, philosophy is a particular (*jeweilige*) knowledge of totality (cf. Krijnen 2008, ch. 4; 2010).



following the line of thought of rational metaphysics, conceives of freedom as a “power of causality,” as the capability of beginning a series of events spontaneously, of one’s own accord, from one’s own law (the cosmological law of freedom: spontaneous causality). Hegel rejects such a general concept of freedom, a concept of freedom that even underlies Kant’s practical philosophy. For Hegel, freedom is not a power of causality but being with oneself in one’s otherness (freedom as a power of intelligible causality would at most be a specification of this most general concept of freedom). If the “ground” of caused appearances is conceived of as a spontaneous causality, then the relationship between cause and effect is and remains an *external* one. Seen from Hegel’s perspective, Spinoza’s philosophy of substance definitely offers a counter model. Instead of conceiving freedom comprehensively as a spontaneous cause, and hence foundation, of the world of appearances, Hegel appropriates Spinoza’s concept of substance and transforms it speculatively. His famous formula that the “substance” turns out to be the “subject” already indicates this. The substance has to be conceived of in a modern idealist way, that is, in the fashion of a philosophy of subjectivity. The “absolute power” and “blind necessity” characterizing Spinoza’s substance thus become the freedom that is thought, the concept, or the idea. The cosmological unity of ground (cause) and effect would then transpire to be the immanent necessity of comprehending thought itself. As Hegel puts it, the absolute “expounds itself” – its “*expositor*” is the “*absolute necessity*.” He states: “Therefore, the determinations of the absolute are no longer ‘attributes’ that emerge from an ‘*external reflection*,’ but they are ‘identical positing of itself’ (WL, GW 11:393; cf. 370f., 375). Hegel explains this process of manifestation, self-expounding of the absolute, in a way that the truly absolute relation is “*posited unity* of itself in its *determinations*,” that is, the “*concept*” (WL, GW 11:393f.; WL, GW 12:11ff.). The achieved self-referential unity of the absolute substance is the concept in general: a relation to itself that manifests itself, or *freedom*. Hence, freedom, which is the concept, is the ground of actuality as appearance, not merely a spontaneous causality. Its power and necessity are characterized by an “*inner necessity*” that comes to be freedom because its identity, which is in the first instance only an “*inner identity*,” *manifests* itself (WL, GW 11:409). By passing through rationalism and empiricism (WL, GW 11:393ff.), Hegel finally even sublates Kant’s transcendental unity of apperception in the freedom of the concept (WL, GW 12:17ff.).

Such freedom of spontaneous self-determination and complete self-mediation, characteristic of the activity of the concept and the necessity



that belongs to it, seen systematically, precedes or founds any specification of freedom (in particular, spiritual freedom). It is the “absolute negativity of the concept as identity with itself” (*Enc.* §382). This absolute negativity of the concept as identity with itself preserves itself in the further progression of the logic, with respect to the logical development of the concept to the idea as well as to the elements of reality, and hence to something elementarily different that despite its sheer otherness is founded in it. About this transition to reality, Hegel holds that the “pure idea,” in which the determinacy of the concept is itself “raised into concept,” is an absolute *liberation*, the “concept that remains with itself” (*WL, GW* 12:253).

### Philosophy of Spirit as Philosophy of Freedom

In the course of its emergence from the logic of essence, namely, the relation of substantiality, the concept transforms the unity of substance into a posited identity that is the “identity of the concept” (*WL, GW* 12:15). In this way, a self-referential relationship of “absolute negativity” is achieved that Hegel qualifies as freedom, and by implication as “*manifested identity*” (*WL, GW* 12:15). For Hegel, manifestation as an activity of something which is truly absolute must be thought of as the manifestation of this absolute itself in its expression (*WL, GW* 11:375f., 380, 397f.; *Enc.* §§139, 142R, 151). Hence, nature and spiritual reality are specific manifestations of the concept, and therefore are specific manifestations of that which is free. Freedom does not exhaust itself in the realm of the logical, but it does have a logical foundation. It is grounded in logic speculatively.<sup>14</sup> We are free because the concept, as that which is free, manifests itself as a spiritual self-relationship. While nature does not show “freedom” (but merely “necessity” and “contingency”) (*Enc.* §248), more precisely, the essence of nature is not freedom, and thus nature is no manifestation of freedom; the formal “*essence*” of spirit is “*freedom*” (*Enc.* §382). As regards content, the determinacy of spirit is the “*manifestation*” (*Enc.* §383) of its essence (freedom). Manifestation is not a manifestation

<sup>14</sup> The attempt of Bubner (1984) to reconcile Kant’s ethics of maxims with Hegel’s doctrine of *Sittlichkeit* in a hermeneutical fashion is not very plausible because of the content of both approaches. Concerning in particular Hegel, Bubner’s interpretation of *Sittlichkeit* suffers from not taking into account that *Sittlichkeit* has its foundation in the *concept*. As a consequence, in Bubner’s story, freedom does not appear as the superordinate factor of determination of constellations of *Sittlichkeit*. Rather, Bubner’s indeterminate talk of a transparent “coherence of forms of life,” of “hindrance or enabling of praxis” and the like takes its place.

or revelation of “*something*,” but spirit itself *is* this process of revelation. Its “possibility,” therefore, is “immediate infinite, absolute *actuality*” (*Enc.* §383; *WL, GW* 11:375).

This revealing by manifesting or manifesting by revealing of spirit takes place in three forms of itself, ranging from subjective to objective and finally to absolute spirit (or from finite to infinite spirit) (*Enc.* §§385f.).

As *subjective* spirit, the development of free spirit concerns this spirit itself in a narrow sense, that is to say, the relation to itself. Therefore, no “subject” is already constituted, let alone a plurality of subjects (or “individuals”). The subject first is the result of the process of development (constitution) of subjective spirit.<sup>15</sup> Therewith, the essence of spirit is not only freedom, but because the “concept” of spirit becomes “for it,” its being (*Sein*) becomes “with itself, that is, becomes free” (*bei sich, d.i. frei zu sein: Enc.* §385). Subsequently, the free spirit objectifies itself into a spiritual world, which it gradually makes adequate to itself: into a world in which freedom “exists as necessity” (*Enc.* §385). In this form of its activity, the spirit is “*objective*” spirit: a spirit that brings about a spiritual world, a reality in which spirit actualizes freedom (*Enc.* §385).

The realization of the (absolute) idea within the element of spirit is completed when spirit is *freed* from all forms of existence not adequate to its concept. In this case, spirit “actually” is free. This freedom is achieved by spirit only through its own activity; the philosophy of spirit, then, addresses the spirit as “producer of its own freedom” (*Enc.* §382Z). Formally, the essence of spirit is freedom and the spirit in the realm of spirit is “free spirit” (*Enc.* §§382, 384).

At the end of the philosophy of *subjective* spirit, Hegel determines free spirit as the unity of theoretical and practical spirit: “free will that is for itself as free will,” “will as free intelligence” (*Enc.* §481), spirit that “knows” and “wants” itself as free, that is, spirit that makes its own freedom its “purpose” (*Enc.* §482). *Freedom* (self-determination) makes up the unity of theoretical and practical spirit. With this, the transition into the objective existence of free spirit is achievable. For the philosophy of *objective* spirit, it is decisive to comprehend free spirit in its objective existence, and hence, to determine objective spirit philosophically according to the logic of the concept. Realizing freedom in the objective realm amounts to rendering explicit what is implicit concerning this actualization of the purpose (freedom). The free spirit as result of

<sup>15</sup> This seems to be underestimated in the contemporary discourse on recognition (cf. Krijnen 2014).

subjective spirit is in fact “actual” (*Enc.* §§480ff.) free spirit. Free spirit not only has freedom as its “essence”; it has this essence at the same time as its “determination” and its “purpose” (*Enc.* §482, cf. §483). Objective spirit is that free will that has made the existence of its freedom its own purpose. (From the perspective of constituting meanings in the system of philosophy, it is not before the philosophy of objective spirit that we are dealing with a plurality of subjects (cf. *Enc.* §§485ff.); they all have made the existence of their freedom their own purpose.)

This is one side of the coin. The other is that the *actualization* of this purpose takes place in an “externally found objectivity,” which makes up the “material for the existence of the will” (*Enc.* §483). By realizing its concept (freedom) in the “external objective side,” the free will is “in it with itself, united (*zusammengeschlossen*) with itself” (*Enc.* §484). Hence, the world, the “external objective side,” obtains the “form of necessity”; its “substantial relationship” is freedom, while the “appearing relationship” is its “recognition” (*Annerkanntsein*) or “validity in consciousness” (*Enc.* §484). The achieved unity (*Zusammenschluß*) of the free (“rational” (*vernünftig*)) and the individual will – the latter is the “element” of “activation” (*Betätigung*) of the free will – constitutes the “actuality of freedom” (*Enc.* §485). Because of this individuation or singularization of the actual free will, the “external material” is transformed by freedom: freedom comes into the world, and it does so first as “right,” then as “morality,” and finally as “*Sittlichkeit*” (*Enc.* §487). Right, morality, and *Sittlichkeit* are figures in which the idea manifests itself and are therefore forms in which the idea gives itself existence.

Spirit, as the idea that has achieved its being-for-itself and has therefore the concept as its subject and object (*Enc.* §381), is not some abstract general concept of possible spiritual activities or spirits. By contrast, conforming to his program of philosophy and the conception of “realization” that belongs to it, Hegel conceives of spirit as actuality (*ἐνέργεια*), that is, as being active of freedom, aligned to emerge from itself and to come into harmony (correspondence) with itself as freedom.<sup>16</sup> The task is to establish the conditions under which freedom comes into the world, that is to say, the figures in which the freedom of free spirit realizes itself in

<sup>16</sup> The secondary literature about the philosophy of objective spirit, videlicet Hegel’s philosophy of right, does not take sufficiently into account this perspective of the system of philosophy, hence, the formal relationship between a speculative doctrine of the idea and objectifying freedom. Instead, it focuses immediately on the content of the respective determinations of objective spirit. A welcome exception again is Fulda (see, for example, Fulda 2003; 2011).

the objective realm. Seen from the perspective of the logic of the system, the “concept” in its “actualization” gives itself a “shape” that is a “moment” of the idea as unity of the concept and its realization (*RPh* §1R). Hence, the gradation of the development of the idea goes along with different figures (shapes), which are specific “spheres” of objective spirit (*RPh* §33): abstract right, morality, and *Sittlichkeit*.

This, however, does not mean that the figure of (abstract) right and of morality are to any extent “abstract moments” of *Sittlichkeit* in the sense that only *Sittlichkeit* would make up the objective-spiritual reality. Actually, each and every one of these three figures concerns an existence of the free will; each of them is a moment of its existence. *Sittlichkeit*, however, is an existence which Hegel conceives of as the “unity and truth” of the preceding two figures: of “external world” (abstract right) and “reflected will” (morality). This implies that in *Sittlichkeit* freedom exists both objectively and subjectively. Hence, the will here is a substantial will: a will that has an “actuality” that corresponds to its concepts – the will is in itself (abstract right) and for itself (morality) free will, that is to say, *Sittlichkeit* (*RPh* §33 with *Enc.* §487). By overcoming both the abstractness of an abstract system of objective rules and mere subjective self-determination, Hegel has reached concrete life in its objective-spiritual fullness. That is to say, in *Sittlichkeit*, freedom has taken shape as the “living good” (*RPh* §142); “self-conscious freedom” has become a (second) “nature” (*Enc.* §513; cf. *RPh* §151); the “absolute ought” has turned into “being” (*Enc.* §514). Nevertheless, none of these spheres of objective spirit has an “ontological” prevalence. In any event a particular existence of freedom is at issue. This existence reaches from the most minimal correspondence with its concept up to the maximal correspondence; thus, each of them is a specific figure of meaning. To each of them applies what applies to spirit as such: to consider the “concrete nature” of spirit involves the peculiar difficulty that the different levels of development of the concept of the spirit do not remain as “particular existences” but are “essentially only as moments, conditions, determinations of the higher levels of development” (*Enc.* §380). All concern a spiritual existence, a spiritual reality. The actual world of humans is not only *Sittlichkeit* (mere families do no more exist than a mere formal system of right) – the free will continuously gives itself existence. That Hegel via abstract right and morality finally arrives at *Sittlichkeit* is due to his method of speculative comprehension and the conception of concept and its realization that are part of it. The existence of freedom, actualization of normativity can only be conceived of in this manner.

### Philosophy of Right as Philosophy of Freedom

In the sense sketched above, Hegel conceptualizes the philosophy of objective spirit as “philosophy of right.” “Right” means generally the existence of the free will (*Enc.* §486). Therefore, right is determined as a qualification of the free will, giving itself existence. In doing so, the free will actualizes its essence (freedom): the existence of freedom. The philosophy of right or of objective spirit has the task of comprehending the existence of freedom.

In conformity with the logic of speculative concept formation,<sup>17</sup> at the beginning of the philosophy of objective spirit a concept of spirit is at issue which is maximally external to the final concept of subjective spirit as free will. This existence of free will is for Hegel *right*. As mentioned, right is conceived of not in a narrow sense but as “encompassing”: as “the existence of *all* determinations of freedom” (*Enc.* §486). Against the background of Hegel’s logic of speculative concept development, it is plausible that Hegel lets the moment of the will, which is one main aspect of free spirit, prevail and makes it the basic concept of the philosophy of objective spirit (whereas in the philosophy of absolute spirit, thought, which is the other main aspect of free spirit, takes center stage). Hegel conceives of the will not as something that is separated from thought but as a type of thought – thought that “translates itself into existence, impulse to give itself existence” (*RPh* §4Z, cf. *Enc.* §233), thought as a “thinking will” (*Enc.* §469). Within free spirit, it is precisely the moment of the will as impulse which makes up the maximal external moment of thought, and hence, of spirit actualizing its freedom.

The development of Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* is designed to deal with thought. It does so by considering it in the fashion of self-knowledge of the idea. At the end of the conceptual development of subjective spirit, an *actual* free will, which is for itself a free will, is constituted. Therefore, the will is not merely the competence of a subject to determine objects; it is not mere intentionality. By contrast, the will is in itself *determined*, *knows* and *wants* itself, and is in this unity of theoretical and practical spirit at the same time a moment in the *process of self-knowledge* of the idea. As such a moment, free will is the “*existence of reason*” (*Enc.* §482): as a free will, the

<sup>17</sup> On the logic of progression of a speculative development, see Krijnen 2008, ch. 3.4.2, and in particular concerning the philosophy of reality, ch. 4.2.1.2.

will aims to give itself existence in an externally found objectivity; it intends to actualize its concept (freedom).<sup>18</sup>

Hegel unveils the notion of right as a wide concept. Right is conceived of as the will, determining itself rationally (*vernünftig*) into the existence of spirit. This process of determination starts with “abstract right” (*Enc.* §487).<sup>19</sup> Here, the actual free will achieves its existence in individual persons that put their will in objects external to them (*Enc.* §§488ff.). In such a figure, free spirit is maximally external to itself: its subjectivity manifests itself not in the will itself but in an “external matter” (*Enc.* §§488f.). The objective-spiritual process of conceptual development that is initiated evolves from this “immediate” appearance of free spirit (abstract right) to a figure that is “reflected in itself” (morality) and ends in the figure of “substantial” will as the unity of both two preceding figures, and hence, of objectivity and subjectivity (*Sittlichkeit*) (*Enc.* §487).<sup>20</sup> Seen from the perspective of speculative concept development, by starting with abstract right we start to comprehend what realizing freedom in the objective realm is. This perspective of realizing freedom in the objective realm, that is to say, actualizing freedom, makes up the overriding moment; the focus on abstract right (in the sense of “narrow legal right” (*Enc.* §486), that is, positive law and traditional natural law) is functionalized accordingly. The perspective of actualizing freedom even is a foundation for the traditional abstract concept of right. The figures of existence of free spirit as objective spirit itself as well as their relations are the subject matter of the philosophy of objective spirit.

Hegel’s philosophy of right as philosophy of objective spirit deals, in the way described, with the idea of right. It attempts to show how the concept of right realizes itself in an objectivity adequate to that concept (*PRh* §1). Accordingly, Hegel conceives of free spirit as “purposive activity” (*Enc.* §484), striving to give its inner (essential) determinacy an objective existence. Under what conceptual conditions is this, taking into consideration our level of knowledge of objective-spiritual constellations, possible? For Hegel, the conditions of objective-spiritual realization of freedom amount neither only to a contract theory model of abstract right nor to a moral

<sup>18</sup> Formulated from the perspective of self-knowledge, the free will is “in itself the [absolute] idea,” “only the *concept* of absolute spirit” (*Enc.* §482, cf. §483).

<sup>19</sup> On the historical background of Hegel’s determination of right, see Fulda (2003, ch. 7.3.5). Also see Duso (2013) on the relevance of the modern doctrine of natural law for Hegel’s philosophy of objective spirit.

<sup>20</sup> The sketched end applies to the volitional aspect of free spirit; the development progresses to absolute spirit, addressing the idea that knows itself as spirit.

justification of right from the will of the willing subjects. Actually, it seems necessary to include political communitarization, and hence, *Sittlichkeit*. The reason for this inclusion makes up the peculiarity of freedom in the sphere of *Sittlichkeit*.

### The Freedom of Constellations of *Sittlichkeit*

The existence of freedom starts, as sketched above, with a figure of subjectivity of the free spirit that manifests itself not in this spirit but in an “external matter”: that “I” put my “will” into a matter (*Enc.* §§484f.). Conceiving, however, the existence of freedom as freedom of persons who put their will in objects external to themselves (that is, the existence of freedom as abstract right) *itself* leads to another figure of freedom: morality. The reason for this is that in the course of the development of the concept of abstract right, it turns out that abstract right eventually can no longer be distinguished from the individual, “subjective” will, that is to say, from the perspective of morality; the actuality of abstract right requires morality for its own sake; thus, it is “mediated” by morality (*Enc.* §§502ff.). In morality, the will, and with that the existence of freedom, is conceptualized as “in itself reflected will,” not as freedom of (legal) persons but as the free individual that is “subject” as in itself reflected will (*Enc.* §503). Hegel’s moral philosophy discusses the “internal” determinacy of the will, not, as in abstract right, the existence of freedom in external matters (*Enc.* §503). Morality too, eventually, collapses: it turns out to be merely stilted subjectivity, pretending to be absolute; yet morality posits itself to be identical with the good as a substantial (and not only abstract) generality.<sup>21</sup> Comprehending the existence of freedom, by consequence, involves the transition to a subsequent figure: to the substantial will, that is, the figure or shape of *Sittlichkeit* (*Enc.* §§511ff.; *RPh* §§140f.).<sup>22</sup>

Neither abstract right nor morality is capable of conceptually preserving the existence of freedom. In fact, both have, as Hegel puts it, constellations of *Sittlichkeit* as their “carrier and foundation” (*RPh* §141R): abstract right lacks the moment of (particular) subjectivity and morality lacks the moment of objectivity. Taken on their own, they concern inadequate figures or conceptual constellations of the existence of freedom; universality

<sup>21</sup> Morality culminates in an “absolute vanity,” a being good that is not objective but “merely certain of itself”: exactly because of “taking-the-deepest-inward-turn,” the general, objective good the subject strives for dwindles away (*Enc.* §§512, 511).

<sup>22</sup> On this, with regard to Kant’s conception of morals, see Krijnen 2019.



and particularity are conceived of only abstractly, not in their adequate relationship, and hence in their mediation as moments of the existence of freedom. Hegel's doctrine of *Sittlichkeit* is exactly this "unity of the subjective and objective in and for itself existing good" (*RPh* §141Z), the "unity and truth" of both moments, and hence, the idea of the good realized in the "external world" (*RPh* §33; cf. *Enc.* §§487, 513). In this manner, the figure of *Sittlichkeit* first makes individual self-fulfillment in the sense of actualizing freedom possible: it is its condition.<sup>23</sup>

Hegel grasps the sphere of *Sittlichkeit* not as in the natural law tradition, that is to say, not as a *purposefully established social* entity that enables its members to actualize ends designed from the moral perspective. On the contrary, *Sittlichkeit* proves to be a condition of the possibility to actualize such ends. Indeed, Hegel's main concern is not *Sittlichkeit* as sociality but *Sittlichkeit* as the existence of freedom. *Sittlichkeit* as a figure of the existence of freedom is characterized by the constellation that the "subjective freedom" of free spirit gains "immediate and general actuality" in attitude and activity, hence, turning "self-consciousness freedom" into (a second) "nature," that is to say, into nature as *Sittlichkeit* (*Enc.* §513). To be sure, it by no means sacrifices the modern, Kantian concept of the autonomous subject on the altar of the antique, Aristotelian concept of the polis. In *Sittlichkeit*, self-consciousness freedom has become (a second) nature (*Enc.* §513), the "absolute ought" turned into "being" (*Enc.* §514). In accordance with this, Hegel treats the figures of *Sittlichkeit* – the family, the civil society, and the state – in their respective structure and meaning as constellations of *Sittlichkeit*: they are addressed as specific moments in the process of self-knowledge of the idea, and hence of the actuality of freedom.<sup>24</sup>

Whereas the conception of freedom of abstract right is insufficient because it does not adequately take into account the particularity of a free spirit in actualizing freedom, the conception of freedom of morality leads to an "absolute vanity" (*Enc.* §512, cf. *RPh* §141) of the will, with the result that both figures, taken on their own, cannot retain the freedom claim of a free spirit. Hegel transforms them into moments of a higher

<sup>23</sup> "Condition" in the conceptual sense, of course, not as preceding temporally (cf. *RPh* §32R).

<sup>24</sup> The civil society is a figure of human coexistence in which *Sittlichkeit* is (in the first instance) conceptually lost in its own "extremes" (*RPh* §184). Yet this does not mean that *Sittlichkeit* has fully disappeared. It must remain at least at a minimal level even in the "system of atomism" (*Enc.* §523, cf. *RPh* §§182ff.), as otherwise the civil society cannot be presented on the "standpoint of bifurcation," which qualifies civil society as a "spectacle of excess, misery, and the physical and social ruin that belongs to both" (*RPh* §186).



unity that underlies both of them conceptually and makes up their unity: *Sittlichkeit*. As Hegel formulates it, freedom was in the first instance determined as right; subsequently, in the reflection of the subject, it became determined as the good, finally leading to a determination of *Sittlichkeit* as a “subjective disposition of right existing in itself” (*RPh* §141R). Actual, concrete-universal freedom exists only in a constellation of *Sittlichkeit*. A constellation of *Sittlichkeit* is always a unity of subjectivity (morality, particularity) and objectivity (abstract right, universality). It is the idea of freedom as the “living good” (*RPh* §142). Self-knowledge, disposition, and activation have come here to an “immediate actuality,” and in this sense self-conscious freedom has turned into a nature that is mores (*Sitte*, custom) (*Enc.* §513). *Sittlichkeit* concerns the realm of the “concrete” (*RPh* §144), “consciously free substance” (*Enc.* §514), that is to say, a conceptually determined unity that develops itself within itself. Therefore, this sphere “is” in the “highest sense of independence,” however, not as something that is “alien” to the subject but as “witness . . . of its own essence” (*RPh* §§146f. and *Enc.* §514). The freedom of free spirit has obtained an immediate, universal actuality; and accordingly, self-conscious freedom has turned into (a second) nature. Within the element of objective spirit, the universal and the particular have come to a unity. They have determined themselves toward singularity, that is, toward the living good as the existence of freedom. Constellations of *Sittlichkeit* transpire to be the spirit “living and present as a world, and only thus the substance of spirit exists as spirit” (*RPh* §151).

In this way, constellations of *Sittlichkeit* are the carrier and foundation of the inadequate objective spiritual figures of abstract right and morality. Taken on their own, abstract right and morality have no actuality (*RPh* §141Z). They have actuality only within constellations of *Sittlichkeit*: within the world in which we live as free spirits. The world in which we actualize our essence, freedom, is a world of constellations of *Sittlichkeit*.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Seen from this perspective, one can understand what “duty” is without putting blame on Hegel for being conservative and even annihilating freedom. Actual, not merely abstract duties exist only in constellations of *Sittlichkeit*. As Hegel says, duties within *Sittlichkeit* make up the relationships of individuals (*Enc.* §516; *RPh* §§148, 150R), they are “binding relationships” (*RPh* §155Z). And as Hegel is committed to a modern concept of right, the “right of individuals to their particularity” is preserved in *Sittlichkeit* (*RPh* §154, cf. 153 and *Enc.* §516). Hence, concrete subjectivity is not annihilated. In fact, it is first enabled in its actuality. Hegel’s doctrine of duties, therefore, concerns the development of those constellations that are necessary because of the idea of freedom (cf. *RPh* §149 & Z and §29 about misunderstanding duties as “limitations” of freedom). Hegel’s philosophy of right is no practical philosophy, aiming at a set of moral-ethical and moral-juridical standards, but a philosophy of objective spirit that first comprehends objective spiritual constellations in their significance for the actualization of freedom.

### Conclusion

Hegel's philosophy of right has from the start fascinated scholars. Presently, besides intensive historical and philological explorations, influential attempts at a reactualization of Hegel's philosophy of right have been undertaken. In these attempts to rejuvenate Hegel, the relationship between Hegel's philosophy of right and his conception of the system of philosophy, as presented in the *Encyclopaedia*, has been substantially loosened, in some cases even neglected. This tendency to loosen the relationship between the system and its elements also facilitates the widespread but misleading view that Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit is "practical philosophy."

In stark contrast to such developments in Hegel scholarship, we have seen why and how for Hegel it is essential to comprehend the philosophy of right as a philosophy of objective spirit, and therefore as a part of the system of philosophy. Hegel's (mature) philosophy has as its sole content and object the (absolute) idea, which it conceives of speculatively. Objective spirit, then, transpires to be a manifestation of the idea too. For Hegel, this makes up the original determinacy of objective spirit.

Indeed, exploring the presuppositions of Kant's philosophy from the beginning strongly motivated the development of German idealist philosophy, leading to a very complex philosophy of freedom. By loosening the intrinsic relationship between Hegel's system and its parts, however, contemporary appropriations of Hegel's philosophy fail to address this complexity adequately. Yet the question of the relationship between the system and its parts is central to understanding the program of Hegel's idealist philosophy. Hegel's philosophy unfolds as the realization of the "concept" that is and remains with itself in its other and which reaches its full self-realization in the "idea." This implies an innovative and truly radical conception of freedom. While traditionally freedom is conceived as freedom of the will, which is a characteristic of an I as a moral agent or practical subject, for Hegel, in his *Logic*, the "concept" is that which is originally and exemplarily "free." Hence, freedom is primarily not a practical but a logical constellation.

Hegel's philosophy of spirit should be interpreted as a philosophy of freedom. Although this might be apparent, it is not at all clear what the perspective itself of this interpretation should be. We have seen that this perspective is the perspective of the idea. As a consequence of the logical dimension of freedom, Hegel's philosophy of spirit is a philosophy of freedom qua manifestation of the (absolute) idea. Accordingly, the

philosophy of right or of objective spirit is a philosophy of freedom qua manifestation of the idea too. It deals with a particular problem regarding freedom: the problem of the actuality of freedom. This problem emerged from Hegel's attempt, in his philosophy of subjective spirit, to overcome, by free spirit, the highly influential distinction between theoretical and practical spirit, and hence by the conception of a spirit that knows and wants itself as free. Spirit has made the existence of its own freedom its purpose. Then, the actuality of freedom is at stake. Hegel's solution for the problem of the actuality of freedom finally leads him to carve out the specific freedom of constellations of *Sittlichkeit*. These constellations reveal themselves to be the carrier and foundation of the inadequate objective spiritual figures of abstract right and morality. Their inadequacy is due to the fact that from the point of view of abstract right and morality, the actuality of freedom cannot be understood. The world in which we actualize our essence, freedom, is a world of constellations of *Sittlichkeit*. Since *Sittlichkeit* basically is a manifestation of the idea, Hegel's conception of objective spirit cannot be grasped without taking into account that his philosophy is speculative idealism.

# *Objective Spirit*

## *The Pulse of Self-Consciousness*

*Terry Pinkard*

One of the issues facing any account of Hegel's conception of "objective spirit" (in which more or less his ethical and political philosophies are enclosed) is the fact that opinion is so divided as to what objective spirit really is. The oldest narrative is that it concerns the dialectical logical-metaphysical development of a kind of cosmic mind-spirit that culminates in an ethnic nation-state. This type of interpretation began with the hugely influential book by Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus – who initiated the erroneous idea that Hegel's dialectic is the lockstep movement of thesis–antithesis–synthesis – and continues in more sophisticated ways in contemporary literature.<sup>1</sup> Another approach, much more recent, is roughly analytical, sometimes pragmatist, and sometimes very generally in line with Frankfurt critical theory, which looks at Hegel's arguments for various positions and how they stand independently of Hegel's own commitments to any so-called dialectical logic.<sup>2</sup> There are also attempts to view Hegel's political philosophy not in terms of cosmic *Geist* but as a post-Kantian investigation into, more or less, the demands of practical reason, the "sociality of reason." There is also an emerging debate on where to place Hegel in the current disputes about "naturalism," to put it in its most general terms.<sup>3</sup> Add to that the disputes about whether Hegel's political theory is best described as liberal, authoritarian, fascistically inclined, communitarian, proto-communist, bourgeois, modernist, or anti-modernist; whether it has a place for "individuality" or is opposed to it; and so on. Moreover, this list of options is not exhaustive.

<sup>1</sup> This line begins with Chalybäus and Edersheim 1854. It continues in much more sophisticated form in Beiser 2005. Beiser does not fall into the mechanical thesis–antithesis–synthesis interpretation. A very sophisticated version of this is to be found in Bowman 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The list of works in this genre are too long to list, but a selection of them would mention Wood 1990; Menke 1996; Neuhaus 2000; Pippin 2008; Honneth 2014; Yeomans 2015; Pinkard 2017b; Kervégan et al. 2018.

<sup>3</sup> For a general discussion, see Beiser 2005; Pinkard 2012; Ng 2013; Khurana 2017.

To put my own cards on the table: the interpretation offered in this essay is “post-Kantian” in a very general sense while also being part of the “critical theory” and “naturalist” turn but also without any attempt to deemphasize Hegel’s appeal to his “dialectic.” The aim is to show how Hegel’s political theory can be interpreted in that light in terms of its own internal logic in a way that is true to the historical Hegel while also being attentive to more contemporary concerns. It also aims at setting up Hegel’s theory in a way that makes it understandable why Marx would draw the lessons he took from it without at the same time actually interpreting Hegel in light of Marx’s appropriation of him. For its key interpretive term, it uses “self-consciousness,” one of the most basic concepts in all of Hegel’s works from 1807 until his death in 1831.

The term “objective spirit” was coined by Hegel around 1817 for the first edition of his *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. In sketches for his system for his *Gymnasium* students in Nuremberg from about 1808 up until his relocation to the university in Heidelberg in 1816, he more or less called it simply “practical spirit.” It fundamentally covers the ways in which “practical spirit” can best actualize itself in light of its nature and its history. It is based on and fleshes out Hegel’s conviction that the older hierarchies of the pre-modern world have self-destructed and a new, non-hierarchical, social and political world is taking shape.

In his discussion of “objective spirit,” Hegel is thus presupposing that the historical situation in which he and his audience are operating is one in which, as he liked to express it in shorthand to his young students, “all are free.” His defense of this presupposition comes interestingly enough at the very end of the section (*Enc.* §482). We can parse that as the conception that at this point in world history, the very idea that some people are by nature subordinate to others and whose wills are therefore naturally subject to command by others has been rendered unintelligible. Rule by an emperor or a chieftain, or rule by a circle of aristocrats whose most basic claims to entitlement are based on some natural fact about themselves, has turned out historically to have broken down under the weight of the contradictions it engenders in the kind of form of life in which that conception is essential to it. Thus, it has been made rationally impossible to live in the terms of such a natural hierarchy. To put it more generally: the Hegelian discussion of “objective spirit” begins with an assumption that at this point in history, self-conscious human lives have to confront each other as free and equal (*Enc.* §539). Metaphysically, the practical world has thus, as it were, flattened out. That is the assumption, and what that assumption means is what “objective spirit” is supposed to tell us (see Pinkard 2017b).

We need now ask ourselves: How does that line of thought go in terms of what Hegel actually says?

## I Self-Conscious Life and Its Objective Norms

Among the many difficulties facing any reader of Hegel is his rather formidable terminology, so it is best to begin with some clarifications about how the interpreter should understand those terms. First, we want to know how to parse Hegel's central concept of *Geist*, "spirit," or "mind." I take it to be equivalent to "self-conscious life." In that usage, "*Geist*" functions like a species term, where it refers to the form of a living substance such that the living substance not only has purposes (as a plant or animal does, namely, those of sustaining itself, reproducing itself, and flourishing in terms relevant to the species) but, so Hegel puts it, also has its purpose *as* purposes. Thus, "the spirit" refers not to a particular entity but, like "the falcon," to a species. It is peculiar to self-conscious life that it forms a new species that is not simply that of, say, hominid with something extra added onto it (such as rationality), nor is it simply a species with a distinctive set of powers that determines what the good for that species is (such as "Venus flytrap"). For self-conscious life, what it is as a species is a function of how it thinks of itself in light of its place in nature and in historical time. In Hegel's system, *Geist* denotes substance (an Aristotelian concept) taking on the form of self-conscious subjectivity (a Kantian concept).

The apperceptive form is itself empty until filled in by nature or by self-conscious life (*RPh* §6). Since the concept of my self-knowledge is initially empty – in the sense that nothing follows analytically from the mere concept of self-knowledge other than the self as a unity of experiences or phases of life – my self-knowledge is initially your knowledge of me, with the caveat that, as self-knowing, I am aware of your being aware that I am aware of this knowledge on your part, and vice versa about your own self-knowledge. This is clearly unstable in that determining what counts as self-knowledge tends to issue into a regress, and one way of stopping any such regress is to claim a priority for one side over the other. That claim, however, cannot be made good, at least in rational terms, and the kind of struggle over recognition that results from such unsteadiness stabilizes itself into various historically and socially indexed institutions.

The concept of such a social self-consciousness develops itself into something Hegel calls the Idea (*die Idee*, capitalized in English to differentiate it from an idea, *eine Vorstellung*). The Idea is, he says in various places,

the unity of concept and objectivity. In his *Logic*, “Idea” basically covers life and self-conscious life. To put it in very different terms, an “Idea” is a fact-stating evaluation. (The term is borrowed from Philippa Foot [2001].) We can say, for example, of an animal or plant that it is damaged, diseased, or flourishing. An “Idea” thus states a fact about something (e.g., “The falcon is a carnivore”), and in stating that fact also states an evaluation about how the life of that something goes better or worse. The norms governing the life of falcons (and thus a norm governing the species “falcon”) are also facts about falcons. Falcons, for example, cannot subsist on a diet of seeds, and thus they will not flourish if there is not enough animal protein of the right sort for them. Such life-forms descriptions for human subjects, however, fundamentally involve the way that they think of themselves, which, as Hegel thought he had shown in his 1807 *Phenomenology*, are inevitably historically and socially shaped.

Unlike “absolute spirit,” which involves thinking aesthetically, religiously, or philosophically on what it means to be a “minded” being, “objective” spirit begins with the world into which self-conscious lives find themselves thrown. This world consists of the particular needs that people have (food, water, sleep, social standing, some measure of wealth, and so on), the various things of the natural world on which people rely to fulfill those needs and wants, and, importantly, the relations of “singular wills to singular wills,” the way in which the otherwise empty form of self-consciousness is filled out by the content given by other self-conscious lives (*Enc.* §483). The *concept* of a self-conscious life does not determine specifically which of those needs or natural things are required, nor the specific social ways in which that life is filled out. That concept simply states that it is self-conscious, existing in relations of recognition, and has certain needs, but it does not follow logically, so it seems at first that this or that must fill out, in a concrete way, what it is to be such a life.

## II Abstract Rights and Possible Others

The concept of an embodied free will is a concept of a “person.” The concept of a “person” (in this more limited sense than is usual in contemporary English) is that of a self-conscious placeholder in normative social space, an embodied locus of entitlements and commitments, and at this stage of the development of the concept, nothing more.

The obvious peculiarity of self-conscious life is that it must give itself its own form. There must be something about me, as an agent, in my facticity, that involves an evaluational claim, a way in which I can develop

for better or worse. This evaluative fact figures in the form of my existence, even though that evaluative fact is a fact produced by self-conscious life itself. For that reason, the primary normative claim that such “persons” make on each other is that of claiming an entitlement to natural things as “their rightful own,” property, *Eigentum*. In Hegel’s own terms, the subject must give himself an external sphere in order to exist as “Idea.” Hegel even goes so far as to claim that “this Idea itself is as such the people’s actuality, not something that they thereby *have* but rather that they *are*” (*Enc.* §482).

Indeed, one only rightfully possesses one’s life and body, as Hegel says at one point, insofar as one wills it, that is, only insofar as one inhabits the status for oneself. Metaphysically speaking, subjects exist by virtue of each *bringing* itself under the category of rational subject, which each does only by virtue of *being* the rational subjects we are (*RPh* §47). Our bodies are not normatively “ours” in nature. They become normatively “ours” only when we can normatively “claim” it against others, and then and only then does it become “a right.” The sphere of these rights are those rational entitlements that self-conscious lives can rationally demand to be recognized, be part of their *Anerkanntsein*, against others (*Enc.* §490). Or, as we might put it, “abstract rights” are dyadic in structure. One cannot have a “right” except against an other. The abstract rights are the legitimate claims and normative boundaries that self-conscious lives can address to all other possible self-conscious lives.

This conception of self-conscious life, however, lands itself in a self-contradictory statement of itself. This occurs in two ways, one of which functions in the 1820 *Philosophy of Right*, and the other functions in the 1827 and 1830 editions of the *Encyclopaedia*. In the 1820 version, for the right to my property to actually exist, it must be enforceable, and when the right is violated, some individual (myself or another) must enforce my right for me. The enforcement amounts to a “second” coercion. However, for the second coercion to be right, it must be done from “a justice freed from subjective interest and subjective shape and from the contingency of power,” and, insofar as it is simply one “person” enforcing it against another “person,” we do not have full *Recht* (right) here, and therefore the *concept* of the right has not yet been realized (*RPh* §103). This is not a claim about enlightened self-interest or needs; rather, it is about the conceptual requirement for a collective self-conscious *impartial* judgment, something that no individual can embody without some further authorization.

In the *Encyclopaedia*, the contradiction in abstract right is sketched out in a subtly different manner. As in the 1820 version, the argument about the wrongness of coercion of individuals against other individuals also



appears there, but most of the attention in the *Encyclopaedia* version is directed at the subjectivity of free willing itself – the will as it is free for itself, and not just in itself. For that purpose, it is not enough for the subject to be conceived in terms of what most abstractly is required for a self-conscious life to be free (namely, having abstract rights), but rather what it is for the subject to be acting in light of those requirements. When that comes to the forefront of self-reflection, the object of reflection shifts away from the grip of those requirements on him “in the abstract” to “his” grip on them, that is, on whether his own singular motivations are adequate to the universality of the rational requirements of abstract right that are the backbone of such rights in the first place. Only a subject with the proper “grip” on universal “oughts” can be in place to deliver the justice freed from the contingency of power.

### III Rules, Intentions, Bad Faith, and Evil: The Moral Sphere

The requirements of abstract right are dyadic, involving other possible agents. Once the issue has shifted to the subject’s grip on those requirements, the direct relation to another agent drops out to be replaced by a mediated relation to other agents involving universal rules or principles and with the subject’s grip on them. With that, the subject is now conceived monadically: wronging another is now a matter of breaking the rules, as if there were a kind of universal game defined by a set of rules together with the idea of some kind of universal referee who both adjudicates the game and calls fouls when the rules are broken.

Children (and what Hegel calls “uncultured” persons) only, as it were, follow such rules even though they do so (in a limited sense) knowingly. Those people, although they know what they are doing, have no deeper grasp of the point of the rule. Now, understanding the point of the action is, in Hegel’s terms, to be “reflected into oneself,” which is to be “in” the action and to see oneself as the person-doing-x or even the “kind-of-person-who-does-x.” Thus, on Hegel’s view, although all action is self-conscious in that I have to know very generally what I am doing in order to be said to be acting at all, that takes us only halfway.<sup>4</sup>

After such “reflection into oneself,” we now have the picture of the moral will, seeking the “point” of the rules that its or others’ wills have laid down. As such, the basis for those rules seems to come from outside the

<sup>4</sup> On the disputes about Hegel’s concept of action, see Quante 2004 and Pippin 2008; cf. Yeomans 2011.

concept of willing itself, from desires, social rules, or other authoritative figures, etc., and the will simply receives them as the filling-out of its rational purpose.

One might have a reason for willing something, such as "The boss told me to do it," but the reflective moral self-consciousness also wonders if the boss's telling me really is a good reason, perhaps even why there should be bosses in the first place, or whether there are things no boss can rationally require of his or her underlings, etc. Once one starts down that path, the path either is finite (that is, it ends in a given, such as "Sorry, but that is just the way life is") or is infinite (for every reason that you think has stopped the progression, another one pops up), or there is a reason that infinitely explains itself. The first, "given" content is a "negation," something that the will does not posit on its own but which it finds itself saddled with and against which it contrastively determines itself. The rational will, however, incorporates the aspiration to sublate, *aufheben*, this restriction by trying to make itself adequate not to an external fact but to its own concept of itself, that is, to the facts about itself as a moral agent. This is the will's "infinity."

Although the space of reasons may be boundless, the will is finite in that it finds itself in a world where virtually everything else is independent of its willing. What delineates the will's responsibility? The context of willing does this. As self-conscious and reflective, an agent sets out to do something (she can be said to have a *Vorsatz*, a kind of general intent, but not a fully fledged purpose), and although what happens as a result of what one ends up doing may be ascribed to oneself ("Look what you did!"), it may perhaps not be rightfully imputed to oneself ("That was surely not what you set out to do!"). Just as an animal can set out to do something (the cat sets out to get the canary) but ends up doing something else (knocking over the vase in its failed effort to get the canary), the self-conscious subject may also (but in this case self-consciously) set out to do something, with this "setting out to do" (a *Vorsatz*) being internal to his overall purpose, but what happens in the world would be said to be external to it.

Because of the contingency of the world, it will often happen that things may not turn out to be what one had set out to do. But insofar as my action necessarily includes my knowing what it is I am doing, it might seem that in the very concept of my acting I need only acknowledge what it is that I take myself to be doing, even though (obviously) others can hold me responsible for a great variety of other things I did not set out to do. In the 1820 *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel gives Oedipus as an example of somebody not knowing what he did. That is, Oedipus embodies the

distinction between acting (knowing what one is doing) and what one has done (where one does not necessarily know all the things one is doing or has done). Hegel marks this distinction by regimenting the German terms "*handeln*" (acting) and "*tun*" (doing) to mark the distinction (*Enc.* §504). On that way of taking up Hegel's suggested use, Oedipus' killing his father, for example, is not an action, but is something he did, and, according to the ethos of the ancient world, it is something for which he takes full responsibility, although in the modern world, his moral responsibility for it would be diminished.

So here's the fact about the agent: a (moral) agent acts in light of a self-consciousness about his or her own form, namely, as an existent (organic) self-conscious human. The agent is not willing: I will be in state Z if I intend to do X. Rather, as "reflected into himself," the agent is willing to be *doing* something, not just setting in motion a set of events, not as if he were merely punching the start-button on a machine to get it going and then watching what happens. This marks the difference between setting out to do something (which might simply involve bringing about a state of affairs that is better on some metric, such as promoting overall utility) and intentionally acting (which involves my *doing* something, not just something coming about).

It might seem that putting these conditions on the moral will only lead to infinite regresses, where finding the point of some system of rules requires you find what the point is that assigns that as a point, ad infinitum. One such stopping point for such a regress would be "happiness," or "well-being" as an end in itself, something for which there is no further "point." However, stopping the regress in that way stays at the standpoint of "finitude," which means that however it is conceived, there is always at least "one more thing" to take into account which would stand in contrast to that purported "stopping point." Hegel himself contrasts that with taking the end not to be happiness of any sort, but instead freedom. Freedom (and consequently also justice) would be *infinite ends*, not just in the sense that they are continually and infinitely reproduced (which, if so, would make them out to be more like natural processes just endlessly repeating themselves), but in the sense that they take the given and, as he puts in the lectures accompanying the 1820 *Philosophy of Right*, make it an *Aus-sich-Erschaffen* (a "self-creating process") (*RPh* §123). It involves the will knowing what it is doing or reflecting on what it is doing, with the "good" functioning as such an "infinite end," namely, as the form of those kinds of lives whose actions express a conception of their own form, which in turn involves a consciousness of the standard of goodness for them by

their willing it. Thus, the “moral good” is a good that is the good for those singular creatures whose actions express their self-consciousness about their own form, their good.

But what is that good? It can look as if it is only those singular creatures’ own formal activity of self-consciously willing the moral good. Taking it that way, objective spirit draws itself deeper into the very conception of itself, as that of self-conscious life following objective norms. In those cases, those norms “act on agency,” have their effect on it, only insofar as the agent thinks of the norms. Without thought (or consciousness), the norms are nullities, and as such, powerless.

Since the moral subject in the paradigm case wills what is required of her, to engage in any moral willing at all, the subject, as a singular will, also wills the satisfaction of seeing her ends accomplished. However, it is a confusion, Hegel says, to think that these two – willing the good and willing one’s own satisfaction – are radically different things. They come in a purposive bundle: in willing ends that are valid in themselves, I also will that I successfully accomplish these ends, and I thus also will the satisfaction I receive from having done that. It is especially a mistake to think that since I willed my own satisfaction, that must have been all that I really willed at all, as if “my own satisfaction” were the underlying cause and the willing itself a mere appearance, an epiphenomenon, of that desire.

Once fleshed out in that way, a picture emerges of the moral agent as operating in terms of a counterfactual ideal of itself – as what he would do if he were willing the universal, knew what it required, and knew all the particulars of the given situation. Now, in the very concept of such an agent, there is the concept of the agent’s individuality and the contingency it brings with it. In the 1820 *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel characterized that as the contrast and contradiction between “Good and Conscience,” but in the 1827 and 1830 *Encyclopaedia*, he titled the section simply “Good and Evil.”

Conscience and evil turn out to be alternate and ultimately contrasting actualizations of the same form. Each involves willing something in a world in which information is often highly imperfect. One way of turning the conceptual screw is to appeal to a kind of pure conscience, an ineffable decision (*das Unsagbare*) of the singular agent to will this rather than that.<sup>5</sup> True conscience wills only the good as the rational, but it is the final choice

<sup>5</sup> For a different interpretation, see Moyer (2010), who thinks that in the appeal to conscience “the agent opens his action to assessment by others as he intended it” and that the reference to the ineffable is a “narrow claim about the subjective form of formal conscience that is consistent with . . . the agent of conscience having to say what he takes himself to have done” (ibid., 159 and note 24; 159).

of the conscientious agent who runs out of reasons (or in the practical situation runs out of time for deliberating on further reasons) to claim that this rather than that is what reason requires. He can have no further ground of appeal than his own sense of what needs to be done, having taken into consideration his own fallibility.

On the other hand, one can turn the same conceptual screw the other way, namely, into the claim that the conception of “the” good can only be a mere appearance, a *Schein*, so that in the last analysis what is actual, what is really at work can be nothing more than the singular decision itself to do this rather than that. Hegel calls this the evil consciousness, the idea that the individual, full stop, is totally sovereign over what the final call has to be when stopping the deliberations and acting. Such an agent cannot believe in an objective good at that point. The objective good can only be the mere appearance of something deeper, namely, the singular deciding agent’s asserting his own singular decision as the final touchstone of what ought to be done.

These two ultimately contrasting viewpoints are really two sides of the same coin. The so-called conscientious moral agent looks structurally to be no different from the self-asserting evil agent. Each displays what Hegel calls an enormous vanity, taking itself to be the singular court of last resort when it comes to moral reasoning and to be at least at that point beyond criticism. The truth of the matter is that the form of life of such agents does indeed involve the good acting on them only insofar as they think about it, are conscious of this, their form, but this conclusion of this articulation of the moral standpoint is itself only the untruthful, mere appearance (*Schein*) of that truth. The true appearance of the form of such practical subjectivity, that which is more nearly adequate to the concept of a practically rational self-conscious life, is something else, a life lived in the context of what Hegel calls *Sittlichkeit*, typically rendered as a term of art in English as collective “ethical life.”

The concept of a moral agent on its own – the agent recognizing the abstract rights of other such agents, and willing the universal good that includes his own satisfaction at accomplishing it – turns out on its own terms to be necessarily a failed concept. It cannot make sense of itself. In terms of both of its rigid conscience and cynical decisionistic willing, such a will is simply deceiving itself about what it is doing, and it can, of course, simply continue to deceive itself and tell itself stories, for example, about how its failures are really successes, and so on. In all those cases, the will is not making sense, even if it is still talking as if it did and trying to convince itself that it does.

#### IV From Ethos to Ethics to Markets

“Abstract right” and “morality” are “completed,” so Hegel says, by “ethical life.” Abstract right is abstractly dyadic in structure, dealing with our rightful relations to all possible others. Morality is monadic in that it focuses on the single individual whose grip on the rules established in abstract right is up for grabs, and, who, in working out what the moral rules are in terms of that picture of the relation between a single self-conscious life and the moral rules, enhances the terms of abstract rights to include all kinds of other universalizable duties to possible people. Ethical life, on the other hand, is overall dyadic and has to do with the relations people actually have to each other within the confines of a determinate social and political order. Ethical life begins dyadically, splits into a monadic structure, and ends dyadically. It is also one of the hardest pieces to fit into the Hegelian puzzle. The three sections of it are the family, civil society, and the state, and Hegel seems there to be describing a particular set of, more or less, nineteenth-century institutions. He claims, however, that the domain is a necessary development of “the concept” and not merely, for example, a historical and empirical instantiation of some more general ideas.

If nothing else, it bears the stamp of Hegel’s reception of Aristotle. In the 1820 version, there is little discussion of the importance of the virtues, which seem to be relegated to a kind of secondary status in the theory. However, in the 1827–1830 version (and in the lectures in the intervening years after the 1820 version), the virtues take up a more prominent place, and “ethical personality,” for example, is said to be virtue itself (*Enc.* §516). In ethical life, “personality” is concerned with the character of one’s commitments and with the more fine-grained aspects of dyadic life, whereas the “personality” of “abstract right” was simply that of occupying a place in a normative, social space with its very general (and hence “abstract”) set of entitlements and commitments. The commitments of ethical life are “substantial,” not the stuff of the moral life, where the grip of the moral rules on us and our grip on them always threaten to loosen up in both directions.

Practical freedom has to do with making reason actual in one’s life and world, which involves willing in terms of what is required by one’s concept, that of self-conscious life. However, since self-consciousness is at first merely a formal identity of an “I think . . .” or “I will . . .,” its content, as Hegel says, must come from outside of itself, from either nature or the inherent demands of self-conscious life, *Geist* (*RPh* §6).

More particularly, it will count as free if the individual finds him- or herself in a dyadic situation where he or she acts spontaneously in a relation of full equality with the other, that is to say, in a relation where he or she is neither ruler nor ruled, where the specific ways of developing one's self-conscious life do not involve dominating others, dominating oneself, or being dominated by others.

The three shapes of *Sittlichkeit* are the family, civil society, and the state. Hegel sketches out a version of the emerging bourgeois family of the nineteenth century and interprets it in these terms. Such a family rests on a "union of love and trust," which can function only on a basis of freedom and equality (*Enc.* §518). This will undoubtedly sound odd to twenty-first-century readers of Hegel, since, as is well known, the model of the family he develops is so deeply sexist by twenty-first-century lights that it almost sounds as if he were writing a dark satirical parody about sexism itself; however, Hegel seriously intended to emphasize freedom and equality. He accepts a relatively common nineteenth-century version of biology as destiny, namely, that the "natural differences" of the sexes are also "differences of intellectual and ethical destiny,"<sup>6</sup> and thus he has a "separate but equal" view of the way in which reproductive functions turn into social functions. The man and wife (also a nineteenth- and twentieth-century limitation) together form one person, the "family," in which, unlike much of the practice of his day, the family's property is not in the sole possession of the husband. In the emerging economies of Hegel's time, the pressure on limiting women's roles to those of childbearing and childrearing was lessening as increased hygiene and better medical care were reducing the size of families, although this process was still in its beginning stages in Hegel's lifetime (see Seigel 2012; Evans 2016). None of that determined the "concept" of the family, but the emerging bourgeois family fit more perfectly into the "Idea" of a free union of equals, forming a partnership which neither dominated, and with the ideal of rearing children to become such free, equal persons in their own adult lives.

The life of the family, however, is not self-sufficient. The changing economic and social functions of European life at Hegel's time meant that much of the economic production which had been formerly family-centered

<sup>6</sup> In his marginal notes to himself in the 1820 *Philosophy of Right*, he writes: "The man according to his individuality – positing and respecting the woman as his equal – not higher – as in chivalry [where he] as it were has his religion in the woman – equality, sameness of rights and duties – the man should not count for more than the woman – not lesser" (*RPh* §167, p. 321).

was now moving into different realms where the “household” as a whole did not necessarily participate. Male supremacy in the family, which had previously based itself on the older sense of natural, inherent, patriarchal authority, had to change its legitimation in terms of the way in which men now worked in the newly forming markets outside of family life. The family became the site of “consumption,” whereas “work” occurred in the new “society of *Bürger*,” or in “civil society,” in English (see Seigel 2012, 308–10). In that world, the (male) actors relate to each as singular individuals under a system of rules. Hegel calls it a “system of atomism,” and he is clearly referring to the market systems that were starting to form all over Europe (*Enc.* §523). Hegel’s descriptions of civil society are certainly rooted in this new world of markets and male breadwinners who then retreat after a hard day of combative work in the market to the nurturing unity of the family presided over by the nurturing housewife. However, his account also displays the dilemma of practical agency in those circumstances. If self-conscious life reproduces itself in the family, and does so as an ethical, *sittlich*, unity, then if the family cannot provide for itself, the family members (or at least one of them) must go outside the family in order to provide sustenance. This “sustenance” has to do with the concept that these people have of themselves and what it would therefore take to be able to think of themselves as free and equal agents in that particular social order.

For such male “breadwinners” to be able to provide for the family and preserve its ethical status, the members of civil society have to be able to draw on the resources of something outside of the family, and it is civil society’s serving as a common fund of assets for families to draw upon that justifies it. Everything else done in it is justified only against that background (*Enc.* §524). A civil society based on “abstract right” and “morality” will justifiably function as such a market-driven society *only* against that background. What is often missed in Hegel’s work is a discussion of the extent that if the market does not work in that way, or if the assets are distributed such that the freedom and equality of its members is not upheld, then a market-driven society would be contrary to practical reason itself. And, of course, the problem with civil society as such a market-based system of assets is, as Hegel noted, that it tends toward a fully non-ethical equilibrium in which each participant becomes more and more rationally oriented to his own satisfactions and therefore to discount or snub the larger background that justifies it in the first place. Civil (market) society thus threatens to be self-defeating. Instead of promoting “uprightness” (*Rechtschaffenheit*) as the proper virtue of such a union, it instead promotes self-absorption and ignorance of the



overall good. Because it is a competitive market, some will be winners and some will be losers, so that the equality of its members will always be under threat.

To the extent that civil society can function, it therefore must produce institutions within itself in which the members, who may be unequals in the wider society, can nonetheless see themselves and the other members of their limited institution as equals. In a society of unequals, where do people find their recognition as equals? For the formal recognition of their standing as equals, civil society is required to construct a system for administering justice, but that does not and cannot address the inequalities that threaten to delegitimize the market-based civil society in the first place. Other regulatory mechanisms (charged with the water supply, waste disposal, lighting on the streets, etc.) can only partially remedy this. They will inevitably come up against the barriers posed by the dynamic of market society itself with all its self-incurred shortsightedness. (Hegel calls such regulatory bodies by their nineteenth century name: *die Polizei*.) For the more determinate solution to institutional equality in a society of inequality, Hegel thought that a modern reworking of the ancient estates and a reworking of the early medieval and early modern corporations would fill that role, but historically and socially, he was completely wrong about that.<sup>7</sup> That does not imply, however, that he was wrong about the function they were supposed to fulfill (that of securing the equal recognition of their members). For this reason, not merely the associations of the *Bürger* of civil society but the political state consisting of citizens is practically necessary for freedom to be actual.

## V “I,” “We,” Citizens

The rational basis for the “state” is to secure the freedom and equality of its members. To make this point even more clear, Hegel added a paragraph to the 1827 *Encyclopaedia* (retained in the 1830 edition) on the topic of freedom and equality (*Enc.* §539). The “external” state of civil society (the state based on alleviating social hardship (*RPh* §183)) is to be taken up and integrated into the true form of the state. The relation between the two has to do with two different forms of the first-person plural. The “we” of

<sup>7</sup> See the treatment of them in that light by Yeomans (2015). Hegel is also no doubt appealing to the lingering memory in Prussia of the way in which the older estates not only functioned as genuine checks on royal power but also shared power with the prince. On that topic, see Clark 2006.

the external state is the expression of the “we” of a loosely shared project, which need not recognize equality, whereas in the true state it is the “we” as expressive of some determining feature of a collective, where the equality of the members is constitutive. It is easy to see Hegel as arguing for the true state as a kind of large entity swallowing up the identity of its members and dominating them, and Hegel’s more extravagant and inflammatory rhetoric gives that some credence. Hegel’s point, though, is different. Just as Kant’s “I think,” which must “accompany all representations,” is, as Kant says, expressive of not just a singular self-consciousness but a “universal self-consciousness” (a “we”), so too Hegel’s “state” is an expression of a constitutive “we.” The “I” who thinks of himself as a free and equal member of a state thinks of this not merely as “his” idea of his political identity but as something that has an objective status for him (that is, as a version of Kant’s “universal self-consciousness”). It is this constitutive “we as equals” that determines the true state as a “public” institution and not just as the aggregate of various singular standpoints.

The state forms a public of equals, and this kind of public is necessary for self-conscious life to realize its freedom. If there is no public, then at best the individual agent can accommodate herself to the political order, although she herself would not necessarily be at one with herself in that order. Such accommodation to the political order is in fact compatible with being fully alienated from it, with being bound to it without seeing any further point to that obligation. All the versions of social contract theories prior to Hegel (even Rousseau’s) boil down, in Hegel’s view, to merely accommodationist views of the political order, a kind of “make the best of it” view of the public sphere.

The state’s “constitution” (*Verfassung*) makes the members of the state into a people, all of whom are citizens, not just *Bürger*. Such a “constitution” in this sense is not a legal document, and, on Hegel’s interpretation, it is not really possible to “make” a constitution as a purely legal document at all. At best, the legal document can codify and stabilize a prior conception of authority and standing among the people for whom it is a constitution. (Hegel observes – mistakenly – that Napoleon’s attempt to give the Spanish a rational constitution failed because the document did not fit the prior sense of the “we” that the Spanish had (*RPh* §274Z).)

The constitutional laws of the state define the arenas in which citizens exercise “subjective freedom,” protecting them “against alien arbitrariness and lawless treatment” and thereby forming a “wide field” for people to pursue “their own ends” (*Enc.* §539). This kind of freedom from the arbitrary wills of others (a common theme among the contractarians whom

Hegel otherwise dismisses) is an element of the constitutive nature of a people's "constitution" that actualizes freedom.<sup>8</sup>

Hegel also thinks it is a matter of conceptual necessity that such a state of free and equal citizens be a constitutional monarchy, but his arguments for that conclusion are hard to defend in any of their forms. Such a state, he argues, needs an executive function, and that function can only be real, actual, in the shape of a single natural individual. Strikingly, Hegel does not argue that constitutional monarchy is perhaps the best pragmatic resolution of some sticky administrative issues, nor that it is the best solution for a particular people with such and such a tradition, nor even that it fits some deep human desire for a single person to stand in for what it means to be this, not that, people. It is rather that anything else would be simply irrational.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Hegel argues that a democracy would be similarly irrational, but that hinges on his rather Rousseauian idea that representative democracy simply cannot be democracy – democracy requires something like the intimacy of the ancient polis for its workings – and his non-Rousseauian idea that representative government is the only workable form of political life in modern times. He ends up arguing for something very much resembling a typical nineteenth-century authoritarian liberal construal of the state and government even though he himself denied being a liberal and even thought that liberalism (as it was construed at the time) had proven itself to be bankrupt.<sup>10</sup>

What then guarantees the rationality of such a constitution? Hegel's answer: the "spirit of the whole people" (*Enc.* §540). But what then guarantees the rationality of the whole people? Only the rationality of their own historical development.<sup>11</sup> Or, in other words, answering those questions depends on how one construes history and whether it can be construed as progressive. If "the people" are irrational in some deep sense, no written document can save them. Hegel takes himself to have avoided any kind of charge of "winner's justice," nihilistic historical relativism by the concept of self-conscious life worked out in his *Logic*: It is the abstract dyadic concept of free and equal subjects living and acting together. This is

<sup>8</sup> See the discussion of the various conceptions of moral, subjective, and objective freedom in Neuhauser 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Even Hegel's loyal friend and follower Eduard Gans thought that Hegel's argument for a monarch was invalid. See Gans 1981, 100.

<sup>10</sup> See the discussion of Hegel and liberalism in Pinkard 2017b, 135–38. See also Kervégan et al. 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Part of the "spirit of a people" crucially has to do with the people's religion. Since religion is a "moment" of absolute spirit, it gets little treatment in "objective spirit." However, this does not mean that Hegel thought it was therefore irrelevant for that topic. On recent reevaluations of the central role of religion in Hegel's political thought, see Lewis 2011; Farneth 2017.

the absolute concept by which the limited and finite people of the historical world must end up measuring themselves. It is “Idea”: a fact-stating evaluation of the concept with which existing subjects may or may not be accordance, just as a particular species of animal (say, “goldfish”) may or may not be in accordance with its form (as when a goldfish lives in water with a temperature higher than 85 degrees Fahrenheit).

This “Idea” of what it is to be a self-conscious life develops in history, although it does not begin with a view of itself as being in its concept “free.” The historical developments of self-conscious life have exhibited the kind of large-scale failures that in turn have rationally compelled those living in the wake of such breakdowns. Ultimately, they have also compelled “we moderns” into thinking of ourselves as free – as not naturally existing under the authority of others – and, in coming to think of ourselves as free, we are now becoming the people who actually are free. The philosophy of history thus closes off the treatment of “objective spirit” (see Pinkard 2017b, 135–38). If history is the final court of judgment, then history itself – or at least *begriffne Geschichte*, “conceptualized history” – is to determine if Hegel’s treatment of “objective spirit” is adequate. So far, that court of world history has not issued a final judgment.

*On Hegel's Account of Selfhood and Human Sociality*

Marina F. Bykova

Hegel's account of the self, sketched in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* and systematically elaborated in the *Encyclopaedia Philosophy of Spirit*, is one of the most influential and insightful examinations of the concept in the history of modern philosophy. However, it seems to point in too many directions to allow consensus about its meaning. Much of what Hegel says about the self appears to conflict with many central assumptions of the mainstream interpretation that Hegel is a metaphysician who places the concept of "cosmic" spirit in the center of his system. This "cosmic" spirit is construed as some transcendent, supra-human entity or some kind of presence within the world of the absolute substance which submerges individual consciousness (Theunissen 1970, 59–62; Löwith 1991). Even those who insist on a non-metaphysical reading of Hegel, and who seek to appropriate his philosophy without exaggerating the universal dimensions of spirit, have trouble providing a satisfactory explanation of Hegel's account of the self in all its complexity (Pippin 1989; Taylor 2000; Holgate 2005). Their interpretations attempt to accommodate Hegel's narrative about the development of individual consciousness (Pippin 2011), and they usually discuss this development in purely epistemological terms (merely as a cognitive enterprise), without emphasizing social, historical, and cultural aspects of this process. What often escapes commentators' attention is that the sociality of a human being bears much weight in Hegel's discussion of the self, or the I, as Hegel prefers to call it. To be sure, some commentaries seek to highlight the social dimension of Hegel's account of the individual subject, yet most of these attempts discuss the topic almost exclusively in terms of the principle of recognition, and most notably, in terms of the concept of mutual recognition that Hegel establishes in his *Phenomenology* (Williams 1997; Cobben 2009; Redding 2009; Kok 2013; Testa and Ruggiu 2016).<sup>1</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly, some commentators credit Hegel with a well-established *theory* of recognition, extending its conceptual significance and theoretical implications beyond the *Phenomenology* and

discussions rightly emphasize the distinctive feature of Hegel's account of the self: that any individual self is a mutual, social, collective project, who arises only through interactions with other such individuals. Such social interactions are crucial not only because the encounter with another self-consciousness is a necessary condition of self-consciousness. As self-conscious beings, we advance claims about putatively objective states of affairs, and one's authority to advance objective claims needs to be acknowledged (recognized) by another self-conscious being.

What is often overlooked, however, is that Hegel's account of the social dimensions of the self is much richer than its interaction with other selves, and it is not limited solely to mutual recognition or to Hegel's extensive reflections on (and analysis of) education (Thaulow 1853–54). This essay aims to draw attention to a very important facet of Hegel's account of the self: Hegel's idea of the self as a social construct. A long philosophical tradition claims that selfhood is socially constructed and that one's self-experience is intersubjectively mediated.<sup>2</sup> Aristotle pointed out that a specific feature of a human self lies in human communality, that a human individual is *zōon politikon* – an animal who, by nature (*phusei*), lives in a community, much as bees and wasps do. It is no surprise that Hegel, who was avowedly indebted to Aristotle in so many ways, takes this idea to heart, making it a central element of his own concept of the human self (the I) as a communal (collective) creature (cf. Westphal 2017d). Yet Hegel does not stop there: his notion of a socially constructed I indicates that the I is also constituted by specific historical settings, and by social and political conditions which indelibly and equally contribute to the I's identity and freedom. Not only are our customs, traditions, social practices, and political institutions, as well as laws and norms, products of our own free agency and activity, they constitutively influence and form us as individuals. Who each of us is as an individual is not an inevitable result of biology, but rather, is

claiming the centrality of the concept to Hegel's philosophical system as a whole (see Cobben 2009; Kok 2013). While the principle of recognition does indeed appear central to Hegel's practical philosophy in his Jena period, especially in his unpublished "Philosophy of Spirit" (1805/6) and his *Phenomenology*, and while his Critical account of mutual recognition and rational justification remains *fundamental* to his later works, such as the *Encyclopaedia* (1827 and 1830) and the *Philosophy of Right* (see Westphal 2016–17a), it would be an exaggeration to speak about a presence of a well-established *theory* of recognition in Hegel. Furthermore, it seems that in Hegel's later philosophy, the notion of recognition becomes subordinated to other concepts and principles, which are assigned much greater significance than the principle of recognition enjoyed in the *Phenomenology*.

<sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning that "selfhood" is usually understood as the quality that constitutes one's individuality. This is the meaning I use here. Similarly, by referring to the "self," I refer to a human individual. No special psychological or clinical connotation is assumed here.

highly contingent on social and historical processes in which all of us participate individually and collectively. People do not only create their social and cultural worlds; at the same time, these worlds – and those who cohabit them together with us – create each of us. In this sense, the social reality, which is our artifact, is also a medium through which we become humans in the first place. This human sociality is our acquired yet constitutively necessary second nature. Only through participating in social reality can we liberate ourselves from the limits of our first nature, i.e., our natural constitution and uncultivated state of existence (cf. Westphal 2017d).

Hegel pursues this key topic in his philosophy of objective spirit, which he outlines in the *Encyclopaedia* and *Philosophy of Right*. More specifically, he discusses the self as a social construct through the lens of what he calls *Sittlichkeit* (“ethical life”). Hegel expressly identifies participation in modern *Sittlichkeit* as the means toward human self-actualization and freedom. Only an “ethical” individual can fully realize his potential to be a free, rational, and responsible agent. Thus, as a system of shared customs and social institutions, *Sittlichkeit* is the actual milieu within which the self achieves its true identity. This actualization occurs through the self’s participation in the family and civil society, and through the exercise of its rights, privileges, and obligations as a member of the state. A social world incorporating the modern *Sittlichkeit* provides the social structures needed to actualize individual subjective freedom, allowing one to fully exercise and express the attitudes associated with these achievements. By examining how the ethical is the true mode of existence of a social individual, and how a human individual is shaped through participating in sociopolitical practices and institutions, this essay primarily considers the structures of *Sittlichkeit* that make possible a social world which is hospitable to realizing individual human freedom.

## I Preliminary Remarks: On Hegel’s Concept of the I

Hegel formed his notion of the individual self (the I) in response to Fichte’s concept of the self-positing I, which is conceived as a simple, original self-identity. Having begun his *Wissenschaftslehre* (1794) with a single, self-evident principle of the self-sufficiency of the I, Fichte produced an atomistic theory that centered on a finite individual who becomes the world into itself, closed to any external influences.<sup>3</sup> While Fichte insists that one’s freedom is impossible apart from one’s interactions

<sup>3</sup> For more details on Fichte’s conception of the self-positing I, see Bykova 2010.

with others, and that the existence of other individuals is a “necessary concomitant condition” of the self-positing individual I (*FNR* §3 Corollary (1);<sup>4</sup> see Bykova 2010, 141), he nonetheless considers the relation to another self as largely restrictive. The other conscious individuals put a limit on one's freedom, which inevitably restricts one's expansion and realization. Furthermore, as self-positing, Fichte's subject is immediately present to itself in its original purity and thus appears fixed and indifferent. This subject is not practical because the external world, posited by the I as its own limitation, exists only in concept and not yet in reality. Thus, it lacks a necessary substantial aspect and ultimately affords no real development.

Hegel rejects the notion of the I as fixed, unchangeable, and originally given. He contends that the I is not an “absolute beginning,” whether it be conceived purely as *ego cogito* (Descartes), as an original self-identity (Fichte), or as an “absolute I” (early Schelling). The I is also not immediately given in its “original purity.” Hegel views the I as a *result*, rather than a beginning. Indeed this result is a *product* of the I's own development in its organic unity and dynamic entirety, the *whole* process of “the coming-to-be of itself” (*PhG*, *PS* 18/*GW* 9:18).<sup>5</sup> The medium of this becoming is the world not only the natural world but also (and most emphatically) the social world. Indeed, since the I is not something given or fully fixed by (first) nature, it must persistently shape itself. Yet this is impossible apart from the external world and without involvement in a variety of forms of interaction with the social reality. What constitutes these interactions is not just “reaching out” into the real world and having some actual experience with it, but rather, actively engaging with other individuals, both within their shared historical and social reality and within their practical participation in the cultural, social, and political institutions of communal life. The I is not merely posited; it must create itself through self-mediation of its otherness in and through practical interactions with others within the real natural and social world. Contrary to Fichte and his other predecessors, Hegel no longer considers one's self-relation and self-identity as things which can exist immediately, prior to participating in a variety of

<sup>4</sup> Fichte sums up this idea in the following way: “The human being . . . becomes a human being only among human beings; . . . it follows that *if there are to be human beings at all, there must be more than one*” (*FNR* 31/*SW* 3:39).

<sup>5</sup> According to Hegel, the whole is not merely a totality of facts, as it was understood by Schelling and some of his other contemporaries, and it is also not merely the product of a specific development. As he emphasizes in the Preface to his *Phenomenology*, the “actual whole” is not the result itself, but rather “the result together with the way the result comes to be” (*PhG*, *PS* 3/*GW* 9:10). For detailed discussion of Hegel's innovative approach to the self, see Bykova 2009, esp. 267–69.



intersubjective activities within our human reality. In his view, self-identity and self-relation are not originally given or externally fixed for human individuals. Instead, they emerge from one's experience with reality through active interaction and mediation in and with the world, both natural and social. As a consequence, the world itself becomes a constitutive aspect of the individual as its living milieu, which is the necessary condition of its self-realization as a free individual and the basis of its self-awareness. In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel explains that:

[The] world confronting the [individual human] soul is not something external to it. On the contrary, the totality of relations in which the individual human soul finds itself constitutes its actual vitality and subjectivity and accordingly has grown together with it just as firmly as, to use a simile, the leaves grow with the trees; the leaves, though distinct from the tree, belong to it so essentially that the tree dies if it is repeatedly stripped of them. (*Enc.* §402Z)

This passage not only demonstrates the essential novelty of Hegel's approach to the I and its clear advance over Fichte's, it also indicates an important tenet of Hegel's account of the I: the I exists only as it is practically engaged in and interacting with the real world. Thus, he analyzes the world as actually supporting and facilitating the development of the I toward its own becoming.

As a self-determining process, this development of the I is nothing else but a realization of its own freedom. The world is the realm within which any I will evolve to become itself; it will grow in all its characteristics and demeanors: physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and morally; and this process is both cognitive and social. From the cognitive perspective, this is an epistemic process toward true knowledge that Hegel portrays in the *Phenomenology* as a development from natural consciousness into "absolute knowing," which encompasses the entire experience of consciousness. This process is equally historical since the individual subject develops within the social reality and history of its culture. This historical and social reality is the realm of universal spirit, the (unbounded) infinity of "We" which makes the total realization of freedom of the single subject (the "I") possible. As Hegel points out in the *Phenomenology*:

the task of leading the individual from his culturally immature standpoint up to and into science had to be taken in its universal sense, and the universal individual, the world spirit, had to be examined in the development of its cultural education [*Bildung*]. (*PhG*, *PS* 28/*GW* 9:24)

Seen from the perspective presented in the *Phenomenology*, the individual reviews and internalizes cultural history as the *Bildung* of spirit itself.<sup>6</sup> In Hegel's philosophy of objective spirit as it is introduced in the *Encyclopaedia* and *Philosophy of Right*, the individual becomes "objective" and fully developed within the social world, which is the universal spirit that now appears as the totality of social practices and institutions of the *Sittlichkeit* in which the individual participates. Only through participation in different forms of social life can an individual fully actualize his or her own potential and manifest his or her own individuality. As Hegel states:

[if considering] individuals' simple *identity* with actuality, the ethical [*das Sittliche*] appears [here] as their universal mode of conduct, as *customs* [*Sitte*]; these *habits* are a *second nature* which, put in place of the original and purely natural will, is the all-pervading soul, [the] significance and actuality of individual existence. It is the world of living and existing *spirit* ... the substance existing now as spirit. (*RPh* §151; translation revised)

In this way, Hegel captures an important element of an individual's development: the process of socialization under the influence of society and social practices and institutions. He expressly points out that the "habits" developed in this process become the individual's "second nature," which has its roots in social reality. However, Hegel's conceptualization also emphasizes the derivative character of the social world and *Sittlichkeit*. Social life is not based on merely natural relations; it is a product of human activity and varying human interactions with each other and social reality. Laws, social institutions, and *Sittlichkeit* are not given "by nature", they are forms produced by free human will, and their substance is in "spirit," that is, in human social and communal life (*Enc.* §§514–15; see Jaeschke 2010, 367–68). Thus, the single individual depends on the universal spirit both as the source from which individual persons derive much of their identity (their second nature, in the sense of socially and historically elaborated customs and norms) and as the medium within which this socialization occurs. In addition, the sphere of the universal spirit serves as the basis for their productive activity and the framework for evaluating their achievements.

## 2 The Idea of Freedom and the Process of Socialization

World history, according to Hegel, is the self-actualization of spirit (*Geist*), its development toward the consciousness of its own freedom (*LPhWH* 88,

<sup>6</sup> For more on Hegel's account of *Bildung* and its role in human sociality, see Bykova 2009, 286–89; Bykova 2019.

*GW* 18:153; cf. *Enc.* §§213, 552R; *RPh* §1). However, the “task of actuality,” the “work” of liberation, is performed by individuals, who thus – in this regard – become real “instruments” of this “substantial task” (*Enc.* §551). This encapsulates Hegel’s idea that world history concerns the progressive development of the human individual (the self) toward the realization of its true identity, namely, spirit in various forms of its actualization in the world. In *Philosophy of Spirit* within his *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel tracks the logical progression of spirit through subjective spirit, objective spirit, and absolute spirit, which roughly correspond to the individual, social-communal, and historical-cultural forms of the developmental process, respectively. While each of these three aspects of spirit captures an important sphere and aspect of human development and interaction when taken separately, only when they are taken together do they reconstruct human reality as a whole.<sup>7</sup> This “anthropological” reality depicts all natural and sociohistorical characteristics of the practical and spiritual activities of human individuals in their collective enterprise. The real content of this enterprise is human self-actualization, which Hegel understands as progress toward the true, actual, and concrete freedom of individual members of the human race (*RPh* §§5–7, 127–28, 141). In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel holds that freedom is the “worthiest and the most sacred possession of man” (*RPh* §215Z). He argues that the entire normative sphere or “system of right” can be understood as “the realm of actualized freedom” (*RPh* §4, 29). Contrary to, e.g., Karl Popper’s highly critical portrayal of Hegel as a reactionary defender of the totalitarian state (Popper 1966, 2:245ff.), Hegel was a reform-minded republican (see Westphal 2016–17b) seriously concerned with the fulfillment of individual freedom in the modern social world. In his published works, as well as in his lectures, Hegel emphasizes freedom of thought and freedom of action by insisting that both must be exercised by an existing individual and expressed in the social and political institutions in which individuals participate.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to Fichte, who developed the conception of negative freedom, Hegel elaborates on the conception of positive freedom, according to which society is not an inescapable restriction of freedom, but rather, a necessary condition and the positive expression of one’s freedom. Furthermore, Hegel clearly states that freedom can be achieved

<sup>7</sup> It is worth mentioning that, in Hegel’s view, this wholeness is not a mere sum of its parts but an organic unity that assumes a harmonious interrelation of all its parts.

<sup>8</sup> For a nuanced account of Hegel’s emphasis on the importance of social institutions in developing individual freedom, see Westphal 2010a, 176–77.

and truly experienced only through the intermediation of individuals, social practices, and institutions, and only collectively as the “We.” I shall return to this “we-ness” later, as it is crucial to modern *Sittlichkeit*. Before that, however, it is important to emphasize Hegel’s view that concrete freedom can be actualized only in a social or, more precisely, political community: here a republic can be seen as a rational system of wills (and not as any single individual’s will). Viewed from this perspective, an individual’s socialization is revealed to be necessary for the actualization of human freedom.

Hegel rejects a commonsense understanding of freedom as “being able to do as one wants” (*RPh* §15R).<sup>9</sup> Instead, he follows Kant in equating true freedom to rational self-determination. On this view, freedom is inconsistent with acting on anything merely “given” (including one’s own particularity). On the contrary, true freedom is an act that arises from one’s ability to be fully self-legislative and determinant in one’s beliefs and actions. Thus, in order to manifest one’s freedom, i.e., in order to act as a free agent, one must use the instrumentality of one’s will to achieve this end. Hegel clearly states this point when he says that “will without freedom is an empty word, just as freedom is actual only as will or as subject” (*RPh* §4A). This describes freedom as it concerns the form and content of the will from the subjective side, yet this kind of will is still determined by contingencies which have both external and internal sources (Bykova 2013b, 266–67). Actualized true freedom is found in complete *self-determination*: “the free will that wills the free will” (*RPh* §10). This is the substantive side of freedom, which Hegel describes as the system of determinations generated by our second – socially and cultural-historically cultivated – nature. Only through this social (self)-cultivation and enculturation (*Bildung*) are we able to develop the important ability of conducting ourselves as morally responsible and sufficiently rational free agents (Bykova 2019). Hegel famously formulates this idea in *Philosophy of Right*:

The basis of right generally is the realm of spirit [*das Geistige*]; its more precise place and origin is the *will*, which is *free*, so that freedom constitutes

<sup>9</sup> When discussing freedom, Hegel is often considered a true adherent of Rousseau. It should be emphasized, however, that Hegel takes issue with many essential elements of Rousseau’s conception of freedom, including the French thinker’s belief that freedom entails one’s ability to do what one wants. In his remarks about education, Hegel clearly objects to this sentiment, which he takes to be fundamentally flawed. Instead, he argues that “the boy should not be allowed to follow his own inclination; he must obey in order to learn to command . . . self-will must be broken by discipline; this seed of evil must be annihilated by it” (*Enc.* §396A).

the substance and determination of right, and the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom, the world of spirit brought out of itself as a second nature. (*RPh* §4; translation revised)

This passage outlines the key features of Hegel's understanding of true, concrete freedom. First, the will associated with true freedom (free will) is a rational will. Thus, its goal of developing and expressing its freedom coincides with the actualization of rational (spiritual) agency. Second, the true actualization of freedom is possible only in the social world (the world of spirit proper). The social realm represents the reality of freedom, because here it is expressed and experienced as the "I that is We, and the We that is I." This "we-ness"<sup>10</sup> is more than just a relation between individual subjects as a sort of intersubjective interaction between them. It is a reality that is not identical to any particular individuals, and it is also distinct from their mere sum as an isolated unit. This is the realm of spirit when it becomes manifested as the existing world.

Both contents that are willed by the free will (rational agency and social mediation) can only be achieved in modern *Sittlichkeit* because it represents a social world that integrates all relations and practices into one common life. It should be noted that although Hegel's account of objective spirit encompasses abstract right, morality, and ethical life (*Enc.* §487), spirit is not explicitly discussed in the realms of abstract right and morality; only at the level of *Sittlichkeit* does spirit first become the focus of discussion.<sup>11</sup> One reason for this can be found in the content covered by each of these three sections. While in "Right" and in "Morality" Hegel discusses human beings as separate individuals within society ("persons" in immediate right in §A, Right) or as self-conscious, interacting moral agents (a subject of moral action in §B, Morality), who are not yet integrated into a "universal" and more encompassing whole, in *Sittlichkeit* (§C, Ethical Life), individuals are considered as members of the community (the "ethical whole"), and their individuality is understood only within the context of this community which structures, enables, orients, and guides their individual lives. As Hegel writes:

Because the substance is the absolute unity of individuality and the universality of freedom, the *actuality* and *activity* of each *individual*, in

<sup>10</sup> I borrow the term from Schindler (2012–13, 104). The author uses it to describe the social character of spirit, which I find to be a very accurate presentation of the concept of *Geist*, which otherwise remains widely mystified in scholarly literature.

<sup>11</sup> This arrangement is not unique to the *Encyclopaedia*. The same disposition is also present in the *Philosophy of Right*.

*being for himself* and caring for *himself*, is conditioned by the presupposed whole in the context of which alone it occurs, . . . [yet it] is also a transition into a universal product. (*Enc.* §515)

Some commentators interpret this statement as a purely metaphysical claim. However, there is nothing metaphysical about this passage. Rather, it points to an important idea that makes Hegel's account of human sociality so unique. By using the term "substance" in this context, Hegel stresses what persists through change in human actions.<sup>12</sup> Having learned much from classical political economy and from Aristotle, Hegel shows that what persists through change is interacting human agents who form a community together, and with this community, *their* economy, customs, governance, and livelihoods persist as well. All of these elements are required to enable any individual agent to mature so as to become free and informed and to act freely and responsibly as a voluntary and contributing member of society in good standing. Like Aristotle, who regards a substance as a whole to be greater than the total sum of its parts, Hegel thinks that the "ethical substance" (community) is not just a grand total of the individuals who participate in communal life. Formed as a result of the activity of individuals who come together in a specific way, community is a substantially *new* form of being, which has a reality, to use Hegel's term, in and for itself. What sustains this new form of reality is that the individuals who participate in the communal life make the whole (the ethical substance) not only a motivational force, but an end of their own individual activity.

The passage just quoted further clarifies why, in Hegel's view, only *Sittlichkeit* represents the actual reality of freedom. The institutions that Hegel views as embodying the social and moral relations central to *Sittlichkeit* – family, civil society, and the state – are expressions of the free will. It is not just that human freedom is possible only within a social framework, but also that the attainment of free will is a collective enterprise. Our participation in actual social practices and institutions is, then, the necessary condition of our freedom. Hegel's insistence on the social and communal character of individual and social freedom is distinctive; indeed, it is unique.<sup>13</sup> He articulates this view by conceptualizing *Sittlichkeit* and the development of its specific structures in terms of actualizing human freedom. Genuine freedom is characteristic of the ethical whole. We must collectively rise to understand that the social world enables rather than

<sup>12</sup> For this analogy, I am indebted to Ken Westphal (2019c).

<sup>13</sup> A similar suggestion is made by D. Schindler (2012–13, 94f.), but his analysis is rather limited to the social significance of marriage that he views as the paradigm of Hegel's notion of freedom.

hinders and restricts freedom so that our participation in “ethical substance” enhances our ability to exercise our rational agency and individuality, yet we must also understand *how* this is true. Achieving this understanding requires *practical* efforts! This complex moral development of the individual will toward universality (the “universal whole”), by which we become ethical, is possible only within the context of modern *Sittlichkeit*.

### 3 Becoming Ethical

Hegel’s *Sittlichkeit* is a component of the objectivity of the universal spirit, which he presents as a socially constituted reality. But this reality exists only through the activities of individuals who necessarily interact with each other within the social world. Hegel believes that collaboration and trust govern these interactions because the interests of each individual coincide with the interests of the (communal) “whole,” and because these individuals all have common, complementary goals and aspirations. Hegel calls this “disposition of the individuals” the “genuine, ethical disposition” (*Enc.* §515), which realizes itself in modern *Sittlichkeit*. Moreover, the governing relations of collaboration and trust are not given as natural bonds among human beings, but rather, as social products that result from an elaborate system of human interactions within the social world. These governing relations emerge in the complex development of social practices, structures, and institutions, and they are shaped by individuals’ participating in social and moral life, which is based on a growing awareness of their duties, responsibilities, and interdependencies as members of the “ethical whole.” In this sense, the movement toward the actual realization of the true “ethical whole” is the development of “ethical personality.” Even though it is occurring in the universal context of social reality and within a community of like individuals, each of us must individually perform this task in order to actualize ourselves as individual members of the whole (*Enc.* §516). Thus, becoming ethical not only aims “to *reconcile* us to our *real* social world,” as Rawls portrays it (Rawls 2000, 344); it also is a key aspect of our existence *as* social individuals and a normative principle of our social and communal life.

In *Sittlichkeit*, moral obligations are structured by an already existing communal life: one’s obligations arise in interactions with others, and in turn, their fulfillment sustains communal life itself. Impulses and urges that naturally govern individuals’ lives are now transformed – literally *customized* – into rights and duties associated with an individual’s roles in the community. In ethical life, agents thus transcend the immaturity of

abstract freedom. Ethical individuals live and act according to rational principles and laws that restrict their mere wants and guide their conduct in ways consistent with respect for other moral agents, and consistent with one's own deserved self-respect as an autonomous, responsible, rational agent.

Hegel tracks what he calls the "ethical substance" from its immediacy in the family, through its mediation by the social structures of civil society, to its concrete substantiality within the nation-state. Each stage displays not only a distinct phase of the development of the individual (spirit) into communal spirit, but also the different levels of the awareness that the individuals have of substantial social life itself and the communal bonds that unite them into a unified whole, or, as Hegel puts it, "the identity of their interests with the whole" (*Enc.* §515). At each stage, individuals express growing degrees to which their simply personal, subjective aims come to be realigned into accord with the communal, intersubjective aim of the substance's universal will. Human interpersonal interactions become more vivid by advancing through different stages of *Sittlichkeit*. While individual interactions are initially elemental and mostly limited to a kind of "natural bond" in the family, by acting in a social realm, "relations with others" become more significant and eventually grow into an "organic actuality" of the universality in the ethical state (*Enc.* §§535–36). In this sense, *Sittlichkeit* is Hegel's portrayal and systematization of the human interpersonal communal activity that builds the spirit of a people from its immediacy in the family to its substantial existence in the nation-state. This process surmounts the particularity of individuals and the one-sidedness of family life and civil society, so that individuals begin to treat the laws and rational principles of their nation-state as their own, using them as criteria of their own conduct and activities. In the nation-state, the individual self-consciousness achieves a dialectical awareness of its belonging to a new (communal) family, wherein the individual becomes a responsible citizen in his state by participating in the ethical whole and acting as a member of the community.

In Hegel's curiously obscure language, the ethical whole manifests the universality of spirit. The individual's movement from family to national, communal consciousness then coincides with and contributes to spirit's quest to realize itself within human reality; this is achieved in *Sittlichkeit*. As Hegel states:

[T]he divine spirit's self-introduction into actuality, the liberation of actuality to spirit, means that what in the world is supposed to be *holiness* is



displaced by *ethical life*. Instead of the vow of chastity, only now does *marriage* rank as the ethical, and therefore, the *family* as the highest condition in this aspect of humanity. Instead of the vow of poverty . . . what counts is the *activity* of acquisition by one's own intellect and industry, and *honesty* in this traffic and use of wealth, ethical life in civil society. Instead of the vow of obedience, what matters is *obedience* to the *law* and the legal arrangements of the state – an obedience that is itself genuine freedom, because the state is one's own reason, self-actualizing reason: *ethical life* in the *state*. (*Enc.* §552R)

What had been honored by *abstract vows* of chastity, poverty, and obedience is now given concrete reality in ethical life; what was previously grasped by feeling is now comprehended by thought. The ethical is thus, Hegel argues, the realm of actualized rational agency. In modern *Sittlichkeit*, the values that individuals might hold as moral convictions now become obligations that these individuals assume and execute as ethical beings. The transformation which begins in immediacy, where feelings of love are the effective “law,” and which progresses through mediation by civil society where original natural determination is replaced by communal laws external to the individual persons, comes to completion in the republican nation-state. In this state statutory laws are internally recognized by individuals as rational principles by which they govern their own behaviors and activities.

This transformation is not historical, but rather, logical; it is explicative and structural. At its core, it develops from sheer individuality to communality, from individual independence to participatory membership within the substantial whole, assuming a spirit of cooperation and a sense of belonging arising from common interests and goals (*Enc.* §§514, 523, 524, 537, 542; cf. *PhR* §158). This process captures progress not only *within* the ethical but also *into* the ethical, the essence or constitutive structure of which, as noted earlier, is the actualization of freedom. However, how is it possible that this decline of independence and development of universality, including its articulation as social institutions and practices, provides a stage for freedom unfolding within the world? Many commentators seem to have difficulty with Hegel's notion of community as a “universal substance” and with his insistence on the universality of the social subject. Indeed, Hegel's (alleged) “sacrificing” of the individual for the universal is often taken as a sign of his universalism and of his preference for the universal over the particular. However, within his examination of the practical agent acting within social reality, Hegel is absolutely right to stress the universality of this agent. He clearly grasps that the social subject

is not a single individual nor a separate person, but rather, a member within an association of individuals, or, more precisely, individuals organized into *their own* community, for whom communal and social goals become their own because these are mutually complementary and constitutively interdependent.

Hegel details this idea in examining the development of the truly ethical from individual right and from morality: those are the three main components of his philosophy of law, the moral and juridical theory known as his *Philosophy of Right*. This developmental structure forms a regressive proof by tracking and explicating a change in the individual will's relations to other individual wills. In "Right," the individual will considers itself without regard to any other will: it is primarily self-regarding. It delves into itself, and thinks itself free by shunning any external determination of the will (see *Enc.* §488–89; *PhR* §34). However, once this will aspires to express its freedom, the necessity of intersubjective and communal relations is manifested. The individual must move beyond himself and must accept and include those wills external to his own in order to achieve the freedom for which he strives.

The first step toward this achievement involves recognizing other wills through contracts (*Enc.* §493). In the second major step forward, the moral subject reverts back into himself: after having posited his will in property, and recognized and concluded contractual relations with others, he now considers himself as his own determination, able to discern right from wrong. Thus he raises himself to a higher level of freedom. Hegel finds this in the modern European world:

In virtue of the right of freedom, man must specifically possess a knowledge of the difference between good and evil in general; ethical and religious determinations are supposed *not to make a claim on him* for his compliance merely as external laws and regulations of an authority, but to have their approval, recognition, or even justification in *his* heart, disposition, insight, etc. The subjectivity of the will within itself is an end in itself. (*Enc.* §503R; emphasis added)

The individual's determinations as a moral subject, that is, for good or ill, emanate from himself alone and to the exclusion of ethical (social) and religious determination. At this stage, only his own "heart, disposition, insight, etc." can provide the laws and guidelines by which he acts, to the extent that his subjectivity and self-determination become an end in itself.

The passage just quoted (*Enc.* §503R) also precisely highlights the defect to be corrected by ethical life: the error is in the moral subject's utter subjectivity. Other individuals are indeed respected, but mutual

respect alone is insufficient for Hegelian freedom. The analysis of morality and the moral subject shows that self-determination is an essential element of freedom, but it also brings to light Hegel's rejection of the individualist form of moral judgment. Regarding autonomy as living by one's own moral code, this individualist form falls short of recognizing that thinking and acting autonomously necessarily involve holding oneself responsible to act only as morality permits, including those requirements one acquires voluntarily by living and acting within one's society. Thus, while the moral subject is "this subjectivity that is aware of itself as what chooses and decides" (*Enc.* §511), it still lacks an intersubjective ethicality which assumes true communality and participation in social institutions and practices.

The idea that the individualist form of (purportedly) self-sufficient moral judgment is deficient and requires completion by the ethical to achieve the individual's self-actualization is underscored by how individual freedom is realized in the nation-state. Self-determination remains, but within the republican nation-state, the individual citizen's spirit is elevated within and integrated into the national spirit of the state. Hegel shows how the state develops out of individual activity, and how individual activity builds the spirit and essence objectified as social institutions and practices in the state. Conversely, by acting and living within such a sociopolitical community as the state, the individual is able to shape himself as a political agent, growing in his ability to appropriately express himself through his participation in political institutions. This *reciprocal* relationship between individual and nation enables the citizen to become free and fully realized as a member of the universal whole (*Enc.* §539 & R). His freedom does not come *from* external restraints of the universal (common) will that embodies the existence of other individuals, nor from a coercive power of the political structures and institutions in which the individuals participate. This freedom is the individual's consciousness that his spirit *is* his people's spirit, which is actualized in the laws and principles of the nation-state. Thus, individual freedom in the nation-state is a positive *self-conscious* "concrete freedom": the highest level of rational self-determination. Hegel argues that only in the modern state can the individual become ethical and actualize his freedom, because only here do the "determinations of the will of the individual" "attain their truth and actualization" (*PhR* §261A). Here, Hegel also further reaffirms his idea that freedom is a social phenomenon: it has in its very concept this other-regarding, social, and communal dimension. Yet if in the *Phenomenology* and even in the earlier sections of the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit,

this idea had been postulated as a required principle,<sup>14</sup> in *Sittlichkeit*, and more precisely in the nation-state, this idea becomes actually realized in an ethical totality or the state alone.<sup>15</sup>

Hegel shows that while living and acting in accord with the rational principles and laws of the nation, the individual remains self-determining and autonomous because the universal will (the state) and his will are the same. The individual in the state lives in the manifestation of his own spirit, made actual by his own activity within the community, and objectified with respect to the social bounds of his time, nature, and necessity. Legitimate national law is his law, and he is obedient to it not because he is forced, but because he consciously holds himself responsible to act as moral and legitimate constitutional, civil, and statute law require, because such positive law expresses the natural and social aspects and aims of his own will. Within the state, duty fulfills individuality rather than suppressing it, and individuals do not need to sacrifice anything to give priority to right and duty. In this way, Hegel argues that a citizen's social life is in harmony with his individuality, as he is not restricted through his social and political institutions; rather, through them his freedom becomes actualized and he is truly liberated. Sally Sedgwick summarizes Hegel's thought: "So becoming ethical for Hegel is a matter of willing in appropriate ways; and we can only will in appropriate ways, in his view, with the support of various social and institutional arrangements" (Sedgwick 2013, 210). The "appropriate" ways in this context are those inspired by universal principles and requirements of justice, freedom, and effective agency, which allow the individual to rise to the universality and objectivity of the "ethical substance." Thus, the individual's true self-actualization is possible only "within the universal": through voluntary participation in social and political institutions and communal practices. In this sense, human sociality is not only a necessary condition of human freedom, but the only possible way to achieve and sustain it.

<sup>14</sup> In his recent publications, Ken Westphal masterfully shows that the principle of freedom as a social phenomenon is fundamental for Hegel's critical elucidation and justification of Kant's communicability requirement for rational judgment and justification in all non-formal domains and that this principle along with Hegel's critical appropriation of political economy and Kant's principles of morals lay at the core of Hegel's republicanism manifested in the *Philosophy of Right* (see Westphal 2016–17b; 2017c).

<sup>15</sup> In Hegel's own words, "since the state is the spirit objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life" (*RhP* §258R; translation modified).

#### 4 Ethical Individual and Human Sociality

Hegel insists that individuals are able to fully “realize” themselves only through participating in the institutions of modern *Sittlichkeit* that provides the necessary “resources” and appropriate means for realizing human freedom (*Enc.* §513). Hegel’s account of *Sittlichkeit* is an account of a social world, or a “social system,” which satisfies individuals’ needs and affords and fosters individual freedom (*Enc.* §524). Its social structures and institutions make it possible for individuals to actualize and sustain the capacities and attitudes involved in human freedom. In this connection, Hegel exploits important ideas about the role of modern institutions and social structures in human development – most notably, human socialization, political economy, and Montesquieu’s *Spirit of the Laws* – in addition to examining the correlation between the expansion of social practices and human self-realization. By portraying *Sittlichkeit* as the realm of actualized human freedom, and by attributing freedom to agents acting in modern ethical life, Hegel claims that modern institutions, customs, and practices have become central to the identity of these agents, that is, to their worldviews as members of the community (within their families, civil society, and nation). These social structures and practices become *internalized* as the subjective values and commitments of modern agents, and so become guides, reasons, and motivations for these agents in their various activities and actions, thus allowing to realize their freedom, both collectively and individually (*Enc.* §539R; *RPh* §§175, 185, 187R, 194 & R). Furthermore, Hegel claims that in *Sittlichkeit*, “subjective freedom . . . has its operation and immediate universal *actuality* as *custom*, – self-conscious *freedom* becomes *nature*” (*Enc.* §513). This “nature” is our acquired, yet constitutive second nature as modern *zoon politikon*. As free individuals, we are consciously acting in the world and producing social customs as *actual* universal forms of our rational will. In this sense, the development of customs has an important practical function: to *actualize* and achieve the systematic needs we human beings have, including attaining our desires and ends (*Enc.* §524). Our most valuable end is self-development and self-actualization as free human beings, which is achieved in and through engaging in social practices and participating in social institutions with other individuals. Hegel is acutely aware that individual self-actualization depends not only on decisions made by any one specific individual, but also on desires and actions of other practical agents participating in social life. Additionally, such social factors as law, customs, habits, and beliefs necessarily influence an individual’s personality,

attitudes, and lifestyle, thus greatly contributing to his growth. As Hegel puts it:

The *substance* aware of itself as free, in which the absolute *ought* is *being* as well, has actuality as the spirit of a *people*. The abstract diremption of this spirit is individualization *into persons*, of whose independence the spirit is the inner power and necessity. But the person, as thinking intelligence, is aware of that substance as his own essence, . . . he views substance, his absolute final end in actuality, as something already achieved . . . , yet also *produces* this end by his *activity*, yet produces it as something that simply *is*. Thus . . . the person fulfills his duty as *his own* and as something that *is* and in this necessity he has himself and his actual freedom. (*Enc.* §514)

By conceiving social reality in this way, Hegel achieves several things. First, he emphatically reaffirms the idea of the universality of the social subject. The agent acting on the plane of social reality is not a single individual, but rather, multiple individuals organized into a community. This “universal agent” that Hegel calls “the spirit of a people” bears a “communal” self-consciousness, or a shared spirituality, which includes a system of duties (“ought”) obeyed by the members of the community. When people fulfill their duties, they contribute to the whole; they support and sustain a system of *actual*, extant practices. Only by acting together, as “the absolute unity of individuality,” can they preserve the whole and guarantee steady progress of the social system they enjoy. Hegel stresses that the relation between individuals and the whole is reciprocal. Each individual, “in and for himself” is independent in his “caring for himself,” but “the *actuality* and *activity* of each *individual*” is “conditioned by the presupposed whole in the context of which alone it occurs” (*Enc.* §515). Second, Hegel understands that the genuine individual is not one who retains his self-regarding particularity, but rather, someone who holds himself to universal standards and recognizes this universality (the universal spirit, or the social “substance”) as his own essence. This occurs when the individual learns to disregard his merely individual needs and desires, and to align his own interests with the interests of others, making communal and social goals his own. The real individual self “exists” in the social world as a member of the community; here it manifests itself through intersubjective activity and participation in communal forms of life, which become its own “second nature.” Third, in this way Hegel postulates the “ethical whole” (social substance) as the necessary condition of the individual’s self-realization. Social life is the crucial element of any individuality and subjectivity. Only in social reality, and only through participating in social institutions and practices, can individuals become who they are. Human individuals are

not just “posited” or “situated” in social reality; rather, they are internal to the social world itself as a crucial part of it. By participating in communal practices, individuals produce and reproduce their own sociopolitical reality by rationally affirming the principles, aims, and procedures they find functional and legitimate. They endorse social and political structures and institutions that become the theater of their actions as the real practical spheres in which they can and do exercise their free agency. At the same time, the very practices and institutions that structure human interactions also “shape” the individual into a social subject, a person who rises to universality and recognizes the communality as his own essence.<sup>16</sup>

In this sense, according to Hegel, real individuals are “socially constituted”: they emerge through their own activity within the sociopolitical realm by a complex process of their own sustained interactions. Thus, I disagree with Alan Patten when, in his book *Hegel's Idea of Freedom*, he argues that, according to Hegel, individuals exist as autonomous units who enter into contracts and other social bonds only to attain certain ends (Patten 1999, ch. 1; also see ch. 4). This interpretation seems to miss a significant characteristic of the individual which Hegel points to in his philosophy of objective spirit, namely, his social dimensions. Indeed, for Hegel, the individual achieves his actuality only in the sociopolitical reality that undergirds individuality. Despite widespread misunderstanding, this sociopolitical reality of political structures, social institutions, practices, etc., does *not* destroy subjectivity and individuality; to the contrary, it provides the necessary condition for its development and actualization.

Hegel does not defend either individualism or ontological holism. He believes that social institutions and communal practices do not exist “as such” without the activity of individuals, though not because only individuals are real. He argues that neither social institutions and communal practices nor individuals as such are real. They exist only through their reciprocal implication. Hegel holds that individuals and social and communal institutions are mutually interdependent; neither exists or has its character without the other (cf. Westphal 2003, §§32–37). Just as the social (the universal) presupposes the individual (the particular), the individual presupposes the social. Just as an individual cannot achieve his full development and self-realization without manifesting himself in and through social and communal forms of life, the ethical substantial content (the actuality of the universal spirit) “appears as an action, and therefore as

<sup>16</sup> In Hegel's own words: “the person, as thinking intelligence,” who “is aware of that substance as his own essence” (*Enc.* §514).



the work, of individuals" (*Enc.* §551); thus, it is not possible without individuals' participation in concrete social and historical processes. Therefore, the social (or the sociopolitical) is both the "medium" and "result" of individual action. The two are connected in and through interaction. Interaction is hence the vehicle of association and socialization. It is the vehicle of association because the function of social synthesis is ascribed to individuals who are aware of forming a unit through interaction, and it is the vehicle of socialization because by acting together the individuals who produce the social institutions, practices, laws, duties, etc., become its products. On the one hand, we are members of the social community and parts of the social ("ethical") whole; on the other hand, we become who we are in communal and social life. We are able to make the social synthesis and construct ourselves (our subjectivity) through our activity and being in the social world.

In this sense, social or communal reality is produced by the individual self as a manifestation and actualization of its own individuality and subjectivity. This is not a mechanical task, but a *conscious* social activity of the individual subject toward its self-actualization. The individual, for Hegel, can be "real" only by achieving awareness of the social order and his own role within social and historical reality. To appreciate this kind of development is the point of Hegel's philosophy of history, which, in the *Encyclopaedia* Philosophy of Spirit and in the *Philosophy of Right*, is introduced by only a few short paragraphs on world history. Laid out as the philosophy of the universal "world-spirit" (*Enc.* §549), the exposition of its historical movement reveals the social and communal nature of humanity.<sup>17</sup>

Hegel shows that the human mode of life is self-conscious sociality. What it implies is that human existence includes much more than merely psychological self-reflection. This self-conscious sociality is the self-awareness involved in communal interactions and participation in social practices, more generally, it is the self-awareness in the objective social world as a whole. Although social practices are said to flow from human freedom, Hegel does not derive these practices from a single principle. Instead, he elaborates an account of our social world that integrates our relations and practices into one common life. Only as a

<sup>17</sup> In his recent book, *Does History Makes Sense*, Terry Pinkard (2017b) convincingly argues that Hegel's account of historical progress, which is often discarded as romantically progressivist, is motivated by the philosopher's interest in the nature of subjectivity and his attempt to historically comprehend human subjectivity.



member of the “ethical whole” (a fully developed community) that promotes the rational interests of the individual self through various institutions, norms, and duties can this self fully realize its freedom and actualize itself properly as a human individual.

## 5 Conclusion

Elaborating the idea of human sociality and the very concept of social subject, as well as their conjoint explication in terms of *Sittlichkeit*, is perhaps one of Hegel’s greatest achievements. He rejects the abstract sociological reduction of the subject to the roles it plays in society. He also rejects the notion of the subject as a mere projection and artifact of social institutions and practices. In his system, the social subject is a self-determined entity, capable of self-development and growth. Furthermore, the essence of this subject is communal, intersubjective interactions which unfold in the social world that becomes an actual arena of the subject’s activities. It should be clear that the social subject Hegel discusses is the concrete individual who is the real, practical agent acting in the world.

Social practices, political institutions, and existing rational laws constitute the objective aspect of human agency. Yet this objectivity must manifest itself in the actual willing, thinking, and acting of individuals who should be able to identify their individual subjective ends with the ends of the objective social whole. By consciously participating in public affairs and thus contributing to the development of the community, the individual acquires an appropriate medium for self-determination. In addition, the individual also obtains new material (the “ethical substance”) that he must internalize and make his own, i.e., turn into his own thoughts, ideas, and mode of behavior, so as to become his own “*habit* of the ethical,” which Hegel calls the individual’s “second nature” (*RPh* §151). This internalization of the objective (universal) content develops the individual’s pure natural will into the “spiritual” (social) will, the will enriched by a real world, the “world of living and present *spirit*” (*ibid.*, translation modified). Conceptualized by Hegel as the ascent of individuality to universality, which not only preserves but also elevates individuality into the true concrete subjectivity, this process concerns human socialization, which essentially coincides with and completes the true self-actualization of the individual. According to Hegel, the individual can fully actualize himself only within the sphere of living culture that unfolds in the social world through history. Human socialization is, for Hegel, a long and complex practical achievement, taking shape in and

through human activity over historical time. This is a concrete universal process by which external social and communal relations enter the inner life of the human individual to make up his essence. From the ontological point of view, the core aim of socialization consists in forming persons who are able to become responsible, morally imputable agents capable of a productive engagement with the real world. In this sense, the task of socialization is a process of constructing a genuine individual self. This process cannot be reduced to merely material results. On the contrary, its value lies primarily in the actualization of the specific nature of humanity as being created by and within the social and cultural world, which itself is generated in and through human activities in the course of history.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> I am indebted to Ken Westphal for helpful suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of this essay.

*Hegel's Idea of the State*

Stephen Houlgate

**1 Freedom, Right, and Community**

Hegel's philosophy of "subjective spirit" in his *Encyclopaedia* (1830) shows that the human spirit, when fully developed, takes the form of "*free will*, which is *for itself as free will*" (*Enc.* 3I §481). In his account of "objective spirit" Hegel then shows that the free will – insofar as it is rational, rather than merely arbitrary – conceives of freedom as something both individual and universal. Freedom, for Hegel, belongs to the self-conscious *individual*; yet at the same time, as the object of a rational will, "freedom and its content . . . are the *universal* in itself" (*Enc.* 3I §485). This means not only that freedom belongs in principle to all self-conscious individuals, but also that it has a rational character of its own that individuals must recognize if they are to be truly free.

The truly free will, however, does not just know itself to be free, but aims "to realize its concept, freedom, in the externally objective realm," thereby turning its freedom into "a world determined by the will" (*Enc.* 3I §484). When freedom becomes something objective, something actually existing, in this way, it comes to be, and to be conceived as, *right*. Right, for Hegel, is thus not just an abstract idea, but the "*existence [Dasein]* of the free will" that the latter acquires through its own agency (*Enc.* 3I §486, translation amended). The world of freedom produced by the will is in turn for it a world of right.

Yet this world, though produced by the free will, exhibits what Hegel calls "the *form of necessity*" and thereby becomes a "*power*" (*Macht*) confronting the will (*Enc.* 3I §484). It does so partly because it is objective – in the form of institutions and laws – and so resists the merely subjective whims of individuals, but also because it is generated by the "concept" of freedom, a concept that the will does not itself determine but to which it must, and does, conform if it is truly *free*. In Hegel's view, the free will is self-determining and so makes decisions and initiates actions. Yet, at the

same time, if it is truly free, it is bound by the concept or “logic” of freedom and so builds a world determined by that logic, a world that includes civil society and the state. Since the latter are produced by the logical necessity within freedom itself, they constitute a power that the free will must recognize and respect.

Right, therefore, is freedom, understood not only as something actual, but also as something necessary: as that which the truly free will *must* affirm (see Houlgate 2016a, 106). In other words, right is the will's own freedom, understood as binding it. This necessity belongs essentially to the concept of right. A right does not have the force of a natural law, and so cannot by itself make the will do what the will does not want to do. Nonetheless, it demands recognition from the will and thereby confronts the latter with normative, if not natural, necessity. Hegel implicitly highlights this moment of necessity in right by noting, in the *Encyclopaedia*, that rights bring duties with them (*Enc.* 3I §486) and, in his *Philosophy of Right* (1820), that “right is something *utterly sacred*” (*RPh* §30). In his 1821/22 lectures, however, he makes this necessity explicit: “Right is *necessary*” (*VPR*2, 615).<sup>1</sup>

Earlier in the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel argues that self-consciousness is free only insofar as “it knows itself to be recognized in the free other, and knows this in so far as it recognizes the other and knows it to be free” (*Enc.* 3I §436, translation amended). True freedom, therefore, is not something that the individual can enjoy solely by him- or herself, but is to be found only in relations of mutual recognition – in forms of *community* – with others. In the section on objective spirit (and the *Philosophy of Right*), Hegel shows that the specific forms of community made necessary by the concept of freedom include the family, the estates of civil society, and the corporations. Since each of these is an objective institution that forms a necessary part of the world of freedom, each constitutes a distinct sphere of *right*. Right, in Hegel's view, thus belongs not only to individuals, but also to the communities in which alone individuals are truly free. The highest community of mutual recognition made necessary by freedom, and that contains and sustains all the others, is the *state* – that is, the free, rational state to which modern states more or less approximate (see Houlgate 2008, xxix).

## 2 Right and the State

The family, for Hegel, is held together by the “feeling of love”; civil society, by contrast, is the interconnection of individuals in pursuit of

<sup>1</sup> All translations from *VPR* are my own.

their own particular interests (*Enc.* 3I §§518, 523, 535). The rational state differs from both of these forms of “ethical life” by having as its aim “the *form of conscious universality*” (*Enc.* 3I §535). The citizens of the state, *qua citizens*, are thus united not by love or narrow self-interest, but by a common consciousness that freedom is something *universal* (in the two senses mentioned above). Moreover, they understand the state to be the guarantee of universal freedom, indeed to be itself the embodiment of right. Thus, the citizens of the state, *qua citizens*, are animated by a rational will that wills the universal, rather than what is merely particular, and that recognizes the state to be the objective world of universal freedom.

As Hegel shows, freedom and right must take several different forms, including the right to property, the right to achieve satisfaction through action and work, and the right to family life. The state, however, is the ultimate guarantee of freedom and as such must stand in a twofold relation to these other forms of right. On the one hand, it must protect and realize these rights. Rights claimed by individuals mean little if they are not recognized by an authority and cannot be realized, that is, if the opportunity to own things or to find satisfaction through work is not guaranteed. Accordingly, Hegel writes, the task of the state consists in maintaining people as “persons,” as bearers of right, “thus making *right* a necessary actuality.” The state also “promotes their well-being” and “protects the family and guides civil society” (through, for example, consumer protection measures and setting the prices of the common necessities of life) (*Enc.* 3I §537; see also *RPh* §236). The state, as Hegel conceives it, is thus not a totalitarian institution that claims all rights for itself, but it ensures that the rights of persons and communities within it are realized and do not remain empty words.

On the other hand, the state, as the ultimate condition of all rights, is itself the highest community of freedom. As such, it has the right to prevent the subordinate spheres within it from asserting themselves at the expense of one another, and thereby to preserve them as moments of the whole (*Enc.* 3I §537). This is not to deny that individuals and communities can assert their rights against the state when official bodies and civil servants abuse their power (*RPh* §§261, 295).<sup>2</sup> Yet this right to appeal against the state must itself be guaranteed by the state and its institutions, that is, by the sovereign power within which all rights are realized (*RPh* §278).

<sup>2</sup> For the contrary view, see Schnädelbach 1997, 260; and Siep 2017, 212.

### 3 The State and Its Constitution

In the state, as we have noted, freedom is understood to be something universal. Moreover, the particular rights enjoyed in the state by individuals, communities, and institutions, and the provisions made by the state to realize those rights, are themselves set out in the form of particular universals, namely, laws. “*Laws*,” as Hegel puts it, thus “express the determinations of the content of objective freedom” (*Enc.* 3I §538). Such laws restrict the “independent willfulness” of individuals, since they require the latter to recognize the rights they articulate. Yet in a free, rational state they are also the “absolute *final end*” of human action: individuals pursue their own particular interests, but their activity is informed by recognition of and respect for the laws that secure their rights. Such recognition and respect may be self-conscious and deliberate, but it can also be a matter of “disposition” (*Gesinnung*) and “custom” (*Sitte*) (*Enc.* 3I §538; see also *RPh* §151, 268). Indeed, Hegel claims in his 1822/23 lectures that the habit of respecting the laws and institutions of the state, and of living an ordered, law-abiding life, is in fact what holds the free state together. People often imagine, he says, that the state is held together by “force” (*Gewalt*), “but the bond is the fundamental feeling of order that everyone possesses” (*VPR*2, 1002; see *RPh* §268Z). The state, as Hegel conceives it, is thus not just a political entity, but exists in the dispositions, habits, and actions of its citizens.

These dispositions are initially formed by the institutions of civil society, namely, the estates and corporations into which the latter is divided (as well as by the family). Such institutions, though distinct from the political state, thus belong to the overall *constitution* (*Verfassung*) of the state. Yet the political state or “government” (*Regierung*) also has its own constitution (*Enc.* 3I §541). As Hegel notes, every state has a constitution of some kind that reflects the spirit of the people concerned (*Enc.* 13 §540 & R). In the free, rational state, however, the political constitution is determined by self-determining *reason*, or the “concept” (*Begriff*), as it is conceived in the “subjective logic” (1816) in Hegel’s *Science of Logic* (*Enc.* 3I §541; see also *RPh* §269, and *WL*, *GW* 12:32–52).

The political constitution, as Hegel conceives it, contains some features that critics (such as Marx) regard as irrational, indeed “medieval” (see Marx 1970, 113–14, and Houlgate 1997, 62–69). In Hegel’s view, however, each aspect of that constitution is made necessary by reason or the “concept” and so belongs to a free and rational modern state: “the constitution is existent *justice*, as the actuality of *freedom* in the development

of all its rational determinations" (*Enc.* 3I §539). To understand why the political constitution of the state must take the form described in the *Encyclopaedia* and *Philosophy of Right*, we must therefore briefly examine the logical structure of the "concept" itself.<sup>3</sup>

For Kant, concepts are representations under which other representations can be subsumed, and so they are "predicates of possible judgments" (*CPR* B94). The representation "rose," for example, can be subsumed under the concept "red" in the judgment "the rose is red." For Hegel, however, this is just how the *understanding* (*Verstand*) conceives of concepts (see *Enc.* 3I §541R). Reason (*Vernunft*), by contrast, conceives of the concept not principally as subsuming given particulars under it, but rather as particularizing and individuating *itself*.<sup>4</sup> The concept as such is a universal – whether empirical, such as "lion," or a priori, such as "quantity" – but it gives itself the form of a particular universal or "species" and of specific individuals – e.g., specific lions or numbers. The concept is thus the self-determining and self-differentiating universal. Note that in determining itself in this way, the concept establishes genuine differences between its moments: the universal turns itself into the particular and the individual that are logically different from it and one another. At the same time, the universal *continues* to be the universal in its particularity and individuality, since it particularizes and individuates *itself* (*WL, GW* 12:34). The concept thus holds its distinct moments in a unity that Hegel compares to "*free love*" because it "relates to *that which is distinct from it* only as *to itself*" (*WL, GW* 12:35, translation amended).

The logical structure of the concept requires more detailed examination than I can give it here (see Winfield 2012, 207–30). Yet we have seen enough to recognize that the political constitution of the state, insofar as it is rational and determined by the concept, must hold together in one self-relating unity the *distinct* moments of universality, particularity, and individuality. In other words, the key to a free, rational state lies in the "*division of powers*" within that state (*Enc.* 3I §542R). Each power must be accorded its distinctive role that is not to be usurped by the others. On the other hand, they must also be bound together as moments of one whole. As we shall see, what unites them into a single constitution is

<sup>3</sup> The "syllogism" is also important to Hegel's idea of the state (see, e.g., Siep 1992, 263–64; and Wolff 2004, 297–98). As Sebastian Stein points out, however, the standard Hegel employs to determine the elements of the state is "not the syllogism but the concept" (Stein 2016, 149).

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., *WL, GW* 12:36: "The true, infinite universal . . . *determines* itself freely [bestimmt sich frei]."

the participation of each in the others in such a way that each preserves its distinct function (see *RPh* §272).<sup>5</sup>

The familiar modern conception of the division of powers is set out in Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). In Montesquieu's view, there is no "liberty" if "legislative power is united with executive power," or if "the power of judging is not separate from legislative power and from executive power" (Montesquieu 1989, 157 [part 2, ch. 6]). According to Hegel, however, the concept makes necessary a different division of powers: not between the legislature, executive, and judiciary, but between the legislative, executive, and "*princely*" (*fürstlich*) powers (*Enc.* 3I §§541–44). This – in Hegel's view – more rational division is based on the distinction between the logical moments of universal, particular, and individual in the "concept." As Hegel puts it in the *Philosophy of Right*, the legislative power is "the power to determine and establish the *universal*" in the form of law; the executive or "governmental power" is responsible for the "subsumption of *particular* spheres and individual cases under the universal," that is, under the law; and the princely power brings the different powers together "in an *individual* unity which is thus the apex and beginning of the whole" (*RPh* §273).<sup>6</sup> The princely power is the "beginning" of the whole state – in a logical, if not historical, sense – since it embodies the unity of the state within which the different powers are contained, as well as the state's sovereign power of self-determination and decision (see *Enc.* 3I §542, and *RPh* §§275, 279). Accordingly, Hegel starts his account of the powers of the state in both the *Encyclopaedia* and the *Philosophy of Right* with the princely power.<sup>7</sup>

#### 4 The Princely Power (or Power of the Sovereign)

The "concept" qua universal, as described in the *Logic*, exhibits a certain unity in the fact that it *continues* in its different moments and so relates to itself in them. Yet it comes to be explicitly self-relating, explicitly *for itself*, only as *individuality* (*WL*, *GW* 12:34, 49). Individuality thus has an ambiguous status. On the one hand, it is the concept itself that has come to be for itself; on the other hand, it is only one moment within the

<sup>5</sup> See Siep 1992, 265. This reflects the fact that each moment of the concept is equally the whole concept and so contains all three moments; see *WL*, *GW* 12:32.

<sup>6</sup> Emphasis added to "universal" and "individual."

<sup>7</sup> Starting with the princely power is thus by no means logically unjustified, as Vittorio Hösle contends (Hösle 1998, 567).



concept. Moreover, it is both at the same time: the distinct moment within the concept in which the latter itself comes to be explicitly self-relating.

This same ambiguity is evident in the princely power in the rational state. On the one hand, that power turns the whole state into an explicitly self-relating, self-determining unity, into a subject; on the other hand, it is but one among three different powers in the state. Furthermore, it unifies the state precisely *by* embodying in a distinct form the state's unity and sovereignty. The princely power is thus the "highest pinnacle of the state and its all-pervasive unity" (*Enc.* 3I §542). There is, however, a subtle difference between the state and a universal such as "life." Life takes the form of *many* individual living things. By contrast, the state is a community that is conscious of itself as a single unity; accordingly, it must be embodied in a single individual rather than many. Indeed, in this way the state realizes the concept of *individuality* more fully than life does. The terms "many" or "some" in fact express logical particularity, rather than individuality, as in the particular judgment "some As are B." By contrast, individuality or singularity (*Einzelheit*) is expressed by "this one" or just "this," as in the singular judgment "this A is B" (*WL, GW* 12:72–73).

Reason, or the "concept," thus requires the free, rational state to have one individual head of state, or "monarch." As Hegel writes in the *Encyclopaedia*, "in the perfect form of the state, in which all moments of the concept have reached their free existence, this subjectivity is not a so-called *moral person*" – a company or corporation – but "the will of *one* resolving individual – *monarchy*" (*Enc.* 3I §542; see also *RPh* §279R). Hegel's wording here is significant: in the state in which the moments of the concept have "reached their free existence" – have been fully distinguished from one another – the unity and subjectivity of the state must be embodied in one individual. The legislative power, which passes laws dealing with matters of universal interest, involves the "participation of everyone [*aller*] who belongs to civil society" (*Enc.* 3I §544).<sup>8</sup> The executive power, on the other hand, applies the law – the universal – to particular spheres of civil society and the state, and so is itself made up of different "particular authorities." Accordingly, it requires the participation not of all in society, but only of *some* or "*several*" (*mehrere*) individuals (*Enc.* 3I §543). Sovereign princely power, by contrast, through which the state acts as one self-determining unity or subject, is embodied in *one*

<sup>8</sup> In *RPh* §301 & R Hegel prefers the term "*the many*" (*die Vielen*) to "all."

individual: the head of state.<sup>9</sup> Monarchy – the idea that there should be one person at the pinnacle of the state, as opposed to an oligarchy or directory – is thus not just a hangover from feudal times. It belongs by logical necessity to a fully developed rational constitution in which universality, particularity, and individuality are distinct. “The monarchical constitution” – or constitutional monarchy – “is therefore the constitution of *developed reason*” (*Enc.* 3I §542).

Those hostile to the idea of monarchy may take momentary comfort from the fact that the monarch, as so far conceived, may be an elected head of state, such as a modern president. All Hegel has demonstrated so far is that the head of a rational, constitutional state must be a single individual. Yet Hegel also argues, famously, that the latter must be a hereditary monarch (*Enc.* I3 §542R). Hereditary monarchy, however, is no more a remnant of feudalism in the modern state than is monarchy as such. It, too, is made necessary by the political constitution that is fully free and rational. More precisely, it is made necessary by the severely reduced role of the monarch in a free, rational constitution (see Houlgate 1997, 55–61).

First, recall the distinction between the three powers in the political state. The legislative power determines the laws of the land, and the executive applies those laws to particular spheres of civil society. The princely power, by contrast, does not make the laws (*VPR*<sub>2</sub>, 1016); nor, contrary to what Hegel calls the “false French view,” does it wield executive power and govern (see *VPR*<sub>3</sub>, 1441). It merely provides “the moment of abstract decision” through which laws come into effect and actions of the executive are approved; that is, it grants the “sanction under which anything whatsoever is done in the government” (*Enc.* 3I §542R). The role of the monarch in Hegel’s state is thus similar to that of the British monarch or the German president and unlike that of the US president, who heads the executive (see Wood 2011, 307).

Yet, as Hegel makes clear in the *Philosophy of Right*, the monarch is not the whole of the princely power, but only one moment of it (*RPh* §275). This is because the content of this power’s decisions is contained in the laws passed in the legislature and in the advice given to the monarch by ministers from the executive. All that is left to the monarch as such, therefore, is the “formal decision” itself. In Hegel’s well-known words, the monarch is merely the person “who says ‘yes’” and “puts the dot on the i,” the one who adds “I will” to the laws and policies presented by the

<sup>9</sup> See *RPh* §273R: “the monarch is *one*.”

other two powers (*VPR*2, 1015–16; see also *RPh* §280Z).<sup>10</sup> Note that the decision made by the princely power as a whole is based on, or mediated by, the “objective” content of the laws and counsel presented to the monarch. The *monarch’s* formal decision, however, is groundless and unmediated – the abstractly free decision that expresses the unconditioned sovereignty of the state (*RPh* §§279–81).<sup>11</sup> Since the role of the monarch is to do no more than make this unmediated sovereign decision, *not* to determine the content of the decision, he or she needs no special qualities beyond a “simply educated understanding” (*VPR*1, 177). The monarch’s “existence,” as Hegel puts it, thus can and should be as immediate and groundless as the decisions that he or she will make (*RPh* §281). Monarchs have therefore to be chosen by the immediacy of nature and to be hereditary: “the moment of abstract decision . . . has within it the determination of *immediacy*, and thus of *nature*, and with this the determination of individuals for the dignity of the princely power is established by *heredity*” (*Enc.* 3I §542R).<sup>12</sup>

Note that, for Hegel, monarchy is required to be hereditary by the fully developed *division of powers* within a free, rational state. That division first requires there to be a “princely power” distinct from the legislative and executive powers and embodied in the monarch; and it then reduces the specific role of the monarch *within* the princely power to that of making immediate, groundless decisions (the content of which is provided by the other two powers). The logical connection of immediacy and nature – which is established at the end of the *Logic* and presupposed throughout the philosophy of right<sup>13</sup> – then requires the monarch’s very “existence” to be determined immediately by nature and monarchy to be hereditary. The institution of hereditary monarchy – found today in several European states – is thus built into the very idea of a modern, free, and rational constitutional state.

Conversely, hereditary monarchy itself guarantees that the other two powers in the state attain their rights: for the limited role of a hereditary

<sup>10</sup> Thom Brooks argues that the monarch is more powerful than I suggest here (Brooks 2007, 106–13). Note, however, that war and peace are matters for the “princely power,” not just the monarch (*Enc.* 3I §544 and *RPh* §329).

<sup>11</sup> Note that this sovereign decision is required in all cases, not just, as Tunick claims, “where we have no objective grounds for decision” (Tunick 1991, 492).

<sup>12</sup> Höhle fails to see that, although the princely power is “mediated by universality” (in the form of laws), the *monarch’s* formal decision is purely immediate and groundless. He thus maintains, mistakenly, that the head of Hegel’s state should be a democratically elected (or “mediated”) president or chancellor (Höhle 1998, 567).

<sup>13</sup> See *WL*, *GW* 12:253, and *RPh* §280R; see also *RPh* §11: “the *immediate* or *natural* will.”

monarch leaves the legislature free to pass laws and the executive free to govern (see *RPh* §286, and *VPR*<sub>I</sub>, 549). Hereditary constitutional monarchy, properly conceived, thus cannot be despotic but underpins true political freedom.

In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel maintains that only the “speculative concept” can explain why hereditary monarchy belongs to a modern rational constitution (*Enc.* 3I §542R). The understanding, by contrast, often objects to this institution for two reasons. First, as Hegel notes in 1819/20, understanding sees nature as something “negative” that should play no determining role in a world of freedom and certainly not in selecting the head of state (*VPR*<sub>I</sub>, 545). It is thus incapable of seeing that a moment of groundless immediacy, determined by nature, belongs necessarily to the constitution of a *rational* state (see, e.g., Marx 1970, 34).

Understanding's second objection to hereditary monarchy is that the *people*, rather than the head of state, are sovereign and so should choose their head of state themselves – that the free, rational state should be an “electoral realm” (*Wahlreich*) (*RPh* §281R, translation amended). In Hegel's view, however, such a constitutional arrangement places the final decisions of the state “at the discretion of the particular will,” the will that seeks satisfaction in civil society. Moreover, since particular wills differ in their interests, an “electoral realm” exposes the position of head of state to the struggle between competing factions and so may prevent the elected monarch from embodying for the citizens the unity and sovereignty of the state as a whole. Hegel cites as examples political entities, such as the Holy Roman Empire and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in which, he claims, royal elections actually led to the “weakening and loss of the sovereignty of the state” and its eventual dissolution (*VPR*<sub>3</sub>, 1436, and *RPh* §281R).<sup>14</sup> Yet we know that even in more stable electoral realms, such as the United States and France, presidential elections can prove divisive and set large swaths of the electorate at odds with their head of state. A hereditary monarch, by contrast, chosen by nature, and – *as the sovereign* – without particular interests of his or her own, is removed from the struggle between factions (*RPh* §281).

Hegel also has a more profound objection to the idea that the people should elect their head of state. As noted earlier, this idea is justified by the claim that the people, rather than the state or head of state, are sovereign; in Hegel's view, however, such a claim rests on misunderstanding the

<sup>14</sup> In these entities, of course, only princes or nobles could vote for the head of state, not the general populace (*VPR*<sub>2</sub>, 1016).

nature of political sovereignty. As he argues in the *Philosophy of Right*, one can indeed say that sovereignty resides with the “people” (*Volk*), but only if one understands by the latter the people organized into a rational constitutional *state* that is itself sovereign (*RPh* §279R). Such a state is in turn headed by a hereditary monarch. The idea that the people are sovereign, *as opposed to the monarch*, and that the people should thus elect the latter, is therefore confused: for the sovereignty of the people-as-a-state is embodied precisely in the hereditary monarch (see Tunick 1991, 483). To argue in this way is not mere sophistry on Hegel’s part. The idea that the people are sovereign is the idea that the *free will* of the people is sovereign. For Hegel, however, true freedom is not simply “*arbitrariness*” (*Willkür*), or the capacity to choose and do whatever we want (see *RPh* §15R); it is the system of *rights* that is realized in and guaranteed by the institutions of the *state*. The sovereignty of the free will, therefore, just is the sovereignty of the rational constitutional state, the keystone of which is the hereditary monarch. Accordingly, the people in a free, rational state cannot choose the head of state, any more than they can choose what counts as a rational state.<sup>15</sup> Does this mean that elections play no role at all in the free, rational state? No, but they play a role only in the legislative power.

## 5 The Executive and Legislative Powers

In the *Encyclopaedia* Hegel includes the legislative power in the “*particular governmental power*” (*Enc.* 3I §543), even though its role is to pass laws dealing with matters of universal interest. He does so, I think, because the legislative power is one of the branches of the state that, in contrast to the monarch, are concerned with the particular content of “state business.” Yet, as is made clear in the *Philosophy of Right*, the *executive* branch is in truth the “*particular governmental power*,” since its specific role (in addition to advising the monarch) is “the subsumption of *particular* spheres and individual cases under the universal,” that is, under the law (*RPh* §273). Since its role is that of subsumption, the executive can perhaps be regarded as the exercise of *understanding* by the *rational* state.

The executive is divided into authorities or ministries responsible for different spheres of interest (such as education and finance) (*RPh* §290). It includes the “powers of the *judiciary* and the *police*” (*RPh* §287), though the two are clearly distinguished from one another, since the former is

<sup>15</sup> On the sovereignty of the state, see Houlgate 1997, 56–57.

concerned with legal entitlements, crime, and punishment, whereas the latter (with broader responsibilities than modern police) ensures that “*particular welfare should be treated as a right and duly actualized*” (*RPh* §230; see also *VPR*3, 1442).<sup>16</sup> Ministries are headed by ministers (under a prime minister or chancellor), and otherwise comprise civil servants who have more or less direct contact with the people, communities, and corporations to which laws and government policies are applied. Importantly, Hegel points out that those communities and corporations (and their members) have their own rights that must be respected by civil servants. Indeed, he notes, such rights are what protect both the state and the governed “against the misuse of power on the part of the official bodies and their members” – though he acknowledges that civil servants may also need to be controlled “from above” and even require the “higher intervention of the sovereign” (*RPh* §295 & R).

Since the members of the executive act only with the sanction of the sovereign, they are formally appointed by the latter (*RPh* §§283, 292). Yet their role requires them to have detailed knowledge of both the law and civil society, and so they must prove their competence through examinations as a condition of being appointed (*VPR*2, 1019). Thus, ministers and civil servants are chosen on the basis of their “training and aptitude,” not their “birth or personal nature.” Furthermore, since “ability” (*Befähigung*) is “the sole condition” of appointment, positions in the executive are in principle open to every qualified citizen (*Enc.* 3I §543, and *RPh* §291).

The third power in the rational state is the legislative power. Note that this is just one moment of the political constitution and does not have power over the latter, though it can amend it (*RPh* §298). The distinctive role of the legislative power is to pass laws that concern matters of universal interest and will remain in force for many years, rather than to approve government measures that can vary every year. Such laws include, for example, “criminal laws, laws about contract, about property,” all of which have a “content that is quite universal, that is valid in all particular cases” (*VPR*3, 1449). The legislative power, as Hegel conceives it, is thus distinct from both the executive and princely powers.

Yet it is not utterly separate from them, but contains both as its moments. The princely power belongs to the legislative power insofar as it formally approves laws passed by the legislative assemblies and, indeed, formally summons those assemblies (as in the United Kingdom today)

<sup>16</sup> Hegel also defends the independence of the judiciary by insisting that the government may not threaten to suspend the administration of justice (see *Enc.* 3I §544R).

(*RPh* §§300, 308). The executive power, on the other hand, provides advice to its legislative partner, and to that end ministers should themselves be members of the assemblies (again as in the United Kingdom, but in contrast to the United States) – though in his 1817/18 lectures Hegel states that ministers must “have no vote, but just make suggestions and expound and explain the reasons for these suggestions” (*VPR*<sub>1</sub>, 193; see also *VPR*<sub>2</sub>, 1026, and *RPh* §300Z). Hegel also notes in the *Encyclopaedia* that the content of laws passed by the assemblies may already have been “prepared” or even “provisionally decided” “by the practice of the law-courts,” and the latter – though distinct from the administrative and police powers of the government – belong to the executive power, since they subsume individual cases under the law (*Enc.* 3I §544R).

A rational political constitution, for Hegel, is thus an organic unity of powers, in which each is a moment of the others. It is not a system of “checks and balances” between powers based on mutual suspicion. The latter system is what the understanding, rather than reason, takes the constitution to be, and can lead to a struggle between the legislature and executive, as we sometimes see in the United States and which Hegel associates especially with the French Revolution (see *Enc.* 3I §541R, and *VPR*<sub>3</sub>, 1451–52; see also Schnädelbach 1997, 248–49). Hegel insists that the legislature must hold the “administrative authorities” to account by reminding them that “they not only have to exact duties but just as essentially to pay regard to rights,” namely, the rights of the individuals and civil institutions from which duties are demanded (*Enc.* 3I §544R).<sup>17</sup> Indeed, he acknowledges – in 1817/18 and 1824/25 – that there should even be an official *opposition* to the government in the assemblies (*VPR*<sub>1</sub>, 205, and *VPR*<sub>3</sub>, 1453; see Siep 1992, 253). Such opposition, however, should only be to “*this* ministry,” not to government as such. The assemblies should thus not be opposed to the executive as a matter of principle, but should be, and take themselves to be, moments of a single unified political state.

The role of the assemblies within the legislative power is to debate and then pass legislation. Laws, however, are matters of universal interest and concern everyone, and so should be discussed not just by ministers, but also by delegates drawn from civil society as a whole (*Enc.* 3I §544, and *RPh* §311). Yet the task of the assemblies is not only to ensure that a wide range of *insights* is brought to debates. They also provide a political forum

<sup>17</sup> Siep is thus wrong to claim that, for Hegel, the government is not “obliged to justify itself before the assembly of the Estates” (Siep 2017, 210).



in which “private persons” can express their “subjective freedom” and general opinions; they are the place in which “the many also get to have their say [*mitsprechen*]” (*Enc.* 3I §544, and *VPR*3, 1453; see also *RPh* §§301, 314). In the assemblies, therefore, the “private estate” (*Privatstand*), with its interests, insights, and opinions, “attains a *political significance* and function” (*RPh* §303). At the same time, when the debates in the assemblies are public, as Hegel believes they should be, civil society is itself educated about affairs of state, “*enabling it to form more rational judgments on the latter*” (*RPh* §315; see Wood 2011, 308).

In the *Encyclopaedia* and *Philosophy of Right* Hegel contends that citizens in a free, rational state must be able to *trust* that its institutions and laws serve their interests and guarantee their freedom (*Enc.* 3I §515, and *RPh* §§147, 268; see Houlgate, 2016a, 112–15). Yet citizens must also feel that they are participating in running the state itself. It falls to the assemblies to satisfy this desire in civil society for the “participation of everyone . . . in the governmental power” (*Enc.* 3I, §544). In a large state, however, not everyone can participate directly in the assemblies, so the members of the latter must be *representatives* drawn from civil society.

Hegel argues that members of the upper chamber must be selected by nature, since they are meant to reflect the interests of those who are dependent *on* nature and attuned to the rhythms of the latter (*RPh* §203, 305, and *VPR*2, 966–68) – the interests of what I have elsewhere called “ecological intuition” (see Houlgate 1997, 63). These members, by the way, are not to be confused with feudal nobility and should not include those who are proud of their “lack of merit” (*Verdienstlosigkeit*). They should work on and care for the land, and so can just as easily be called “non-nobility” (*Nichtadel*) as “nobility” (*Adel*) (*VPR*1, 199, and *VPR*3, 1457). The members of the lower chamber, by contrast, are meant to reflect the various spheres of human activity and industry in civil society (*RPh* §308). They can thus be selected by means of elections in which, in principle, all may take part. So, although in a large state it is not possible for everyone to participate directly in governmental power, it is possible for them to participate indirectly through elections.

Hegel states, at one point in the *Philosophy of Right*, that elections are either “superfluous” or “an insignificant play of arbitrary opinion” (*RPh* §311), presumably because they do not by themselves ensure that those with the best insights are chosen to enter the lower chamber. Yet elsewhere he indicates that elections are, indeed, an important part of a rational state (see, e.g., *VPR*1, 200–201). His understanding of the electoral process, however, differs somewhat from what is current today.



## 6 Elections in the Rational State

Hegel's guiding idea, when considering elections, is that the lower chamber should not just represent the sheer *will* of the people: for were it to do so, "political life," which is meant to protect people's rights and legitimate interests, would be made dependent on "arbitrary will and opinion," thus on "contingency" (*RPh* §303R). Equally, membership of the lower chamber should not be determined by the simple fact that a large *mass* of people has certain views. Indeed, for Hegel, the "sole aim of the state" with regard to the "people" is to ensure that it "should *not* come to existence, to power and action, *as such an aggregate* [*Aggregat*]." Otherwise, what would hold sway would not be reason and right, but the "blind force" of the people, the simple weight of numbers (*Enc.* 3I §544R; see also *RPh* §302). To put the point another way, the "private estate" should not participate in the political process as a shapeless mass of *individuals*, since this would base the laws of the state on the "*democratic element devoid of rational form*" (*RPh* §308R).<sup>18</sup> Hegel was once accused by Karl Popper of proclaiming that "*might is right*" (Popper 1966, 2:41). Note, however, that he rejects the idea that legislation should be determined by the sheer will of the people or the majority, precisely because it would give pride of place to the *might* of popular opinion, rather than reason and right.

Elections to the lower chamber should not, therefore, involve individuals coming together "for a moment to perform a single temporary act" and having "no further cohesion" (*RPh* §308). They should be carried out by an "already organized people" (*Enc.* 3I §544R). As indicated above, Hegel accepts that sovereignty resides with the "people," if one understands by the latter the people organized into a rational constitutional state (*RPh* §279R). Such a state as a whole includes the three political powers, but also the institutions of civil society: the estates, corporations, and other recognized associations. In Hegel's view, therefore, private persons should participate in elections to the lower chamber *as members of those civil institutions* (*Enc.* 3I §544R, and *RPh* §308). In this way, they will vote not as abstract individuals with their own (possibly idiosyncratic) views but as persons who understand the rational organization of civil society and are conscious of the recognized interests and rights of the institutions to which they belong.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> This directly contradicts the influential view of the Abbé Sieyès, for whom "individual wills are the sole elements of the general will." See Sieyès 1951, 50.

<sup>19</sup> As Klaus Vieweg notes, the right to vote in the rational state is thus connected to the "adequate political education of the voters" (Vieweg 2012, 384).

Delegates are in turn sent to the lower chamber not simply by a certain *number* of people, but by organized, recognized institutions – “associations, communities, and corporations” (*RPh* §308). They are, accordingly, “*representatives* not of *individuals* as a crowd, but of one of the essential *spheres* of society, i.e. of its major interests” (*RPh* §311R). Indeed, strictly speaking, they are not *re*-representatives at all, since they do not stand in for someone or something else; rather, the interest of each institution is “*actually present* in its representative” (*RPh* §311R). The lower chamber is thus the place where not merely the opinions of large masses of people but the recognized *rightful interests* of associations and their members are given voice. It is, of course, possible that individuals voting en masse as individuals may elect delegates who promote their interests and rights, but this is ultimately left to chance. If, however, voting occurs within recognized associations, there is a structural guarantee that those interests and rights will be given voice in the lower chamber.<sup>20</sup>

For Hegel, then, the entitlement to vote – unlike the right to own and exchange property – belongs not to persons as such, but to individuals as members of recognized associations or “interest groups” (see Vieweg 2012, 437). Yet this does not mean that Hegel’s conception of elections is incompatible with our current conception. In Hegel’s state, for example, recognized communities or “municipalities” (*Gemeinden*) are among the associations that send delegates to the lower chamber, and in modern states delegates are often elected to represent the constituencies in which voters live. If such constituencies have a recognized municipal identity and common interest and are more than mere geographical areas, they count as *associations* in Hegel’s sense (though, as we know, they do not always have this character) (*RPh* §308–9, and *VPR*2, 1029; see Wood 2011, 308).<sup>21</sup>

Modern states, of course, usually have universal adult suffrage, but this too is not incompatible with Hegel’s conception of elections. Indeed, Hegel states explicitly in 1817/18 that “if associations are to send deputies” – to the lower chamber – “and every citizen must belong to an

<sup>20</sup> In Hegel’s view, a further guarantee would be provided by requiring delegates to have held “*positions of authority*” in communities or corporations (*RPh* §310). Note that, in Hegel’s state, laws protecting rights are thus determined by three things: (1) the demands of right itself (and the concept of freedom), (2) the insights and opinions of delegates, and (3) the specific rights and interests represented by those delegates.

<sup>21</sup> Hegel would presumably oppose proportional representation detached from constituencies. Political parties could also count as associations in Hegel’s sense, as long as they represent legitimate interests, rather than just numbers of people (see Vieweg 2012, 437, 442).

association, then every active citizen can also take part in the election" (*VPR*I, 201). He adds that "day laborers, servants, etc., not being members of an association, are excluded"; and in the *Philosophy of Right* he appears to exclude women from voting (*RPh* §301R). In 1824/25, however, he points out that if people are entitled to vote simply by virtue of being *individuals* with free will, "then women also have this right" since "they are individuals" (*VPR*3, 1459). This suggests that, in Hegel's view, women are excluded from voting not because they allegedly lack free will, but because voting takes place within recognized associations and women do not belong to them.<sup>22</sup> This in turn suggests that women, as well as day laborers and servants, would have the vote if they were to belong to recognized associations, and that universal suffrage is thus not incompatible *in principle* with Hegel's conception of elections. Indeed, one could argue that these citizens should already be entitled to vote in the rational state, since they belong to *municipalities* and these municipalities, by Hegel's own admission, count as associations (*RPh* §§308–9).

As Herbert Schnädelbach notes, Hegel would not regard "mass democracy" as a "constitution of freedom" (Schnädelbach 1997, 257). Hegel's concern, however, is not that only the privileged few should be able to vote, but that elections should ensure that the recognized rights and interests of civil society are represented in the legislature. In my view, there is no reason in principle why every adult citizen should not participate in such elections.

## 7 Conclusion

Hegel insists that the constitution of a state develops out of the "spirit" of the people concerned and cannot simply be transformed at will (*Enc.* 3I §540R). Each people, therefore, has the constitution that is appropriate to it (*VPR*3, 1425). Yet constitutions are not fixed, but can be amended through legislation or changes in practice (*RPh* §298). Constitutions can thus be subjected to scrutiny and criticism, and Hegel's idea of the free, rational state provides the standard by which to assess modern states that lay claim to being free. From the perspective of that idea, various features of modern states fall short of what is required for genuine freedom: for example, there is too sharp a division between political powers in some states, and in others an underdeveloped system of rights (of both

<sup>22</sup> In the *Philosophy of Right* Hegel maintains that women have their "substantial vocation" in the family, rather than in "work and struggle with the external world" (*RPh* §166).

individuals and associations).<sup>23</sup> Most problematic, however, from a Hegelian standpoint, is the modern view that the state derives its authority from the “will of the people,” and that the members of the legislature, and in some cases the head of state, should be chosen by the people voting *as individuals* (even when they vote in constituencies).

This view is problematic for several reasons. First, it produces a legislature that reflects the opinions of certain numbers of people, but does not necessarily represent all the legitimate, rightful interests of civil society. Second, it leads some states to decide matters of national importance through popular referendums, in which people with “no further cohesion” come together “for a moment to perform a single temporary act” and in which “arbitrary will and opinion” decide the outcome, as much as insight does (*RPh*, §§303R, 308). Third, it can expose the position of head of state to the struggle between factions. Fourth, and most importantly, it leads modern states to misunderstand what constitutes the foundation of their freedom.

Modern states often take the foundation of their freedom to be the fact that the people *choose* who will govern them. Freedom is, of course, also taken to involve respect for the rule of law, but laws are themselves to be passed by representatives chosen by the people. Accordingly, such states describe themselves as “democracies.” For Hegel, however, democratic popular choice is in itself merely “formal freedom,” the freedom to decide things for oneself on the basis of one’s particular desires and opinions. As such, it is not the foundation of freedom but just one moment *within* genuine “objective freedom,” which consists in the system of rights and institutions that constitutes the rational state (*Enc.* 3I §544R). This system of rights includes the right to choose one’s property and occupation, as well as the freedom to vote, but it is not *founded* on the freedom of choice. It is determined by the concept of freedom, and so is what the free will *must* affirm if it is to be truly free, and it has priority over choice in the rational state. In Hegel’s view, it is this system, not democratic choice, that is the true guarantee of freedom in modern states (if and when it is present) (see *RPh* §272R). Freedom thus resides in the clear articulation of rights and in the distinct civil institutions and political powers that realize and guarantee these rights.<sup>24</sup> Most modern states do, indeed, recognize that the

<sup>23</sup> See Hegel’s remarks on England’s “backwardness” in this latter regard (*Enc.* 3I §544R).

<sup>24</sup> Note that, although the rational state must have both civil and political institutions, specific civil corporations and associations are voluntary organizations (see Avineri 1972, 164–65, and *RPh* §206), whereas the three political powers are necessary.

division of powers is a crucial pillar of political and social freedom. Yet they risk obscuring the importance of that division, and thus of leading their citizens to misunderstand the core of true freedom, by describing themselves principally as “democracies.”

To repeat: Hegel does not deny that elections (through recognized associations) are an important component of political freedom, but he insists that popular choice is not itself the foundation of our freedom. Indeed, we who come after Hegel know that popular choice in modern states can sometimes threaten the rights and institutions which are freedom’s true foundation: for parties can be elected to the legislature, as in Germany in 1930 and 1932, that have no regard for objective freedom at all but seek to rule through the worst “blind force.”<sup>25</sup> *Pace* Popper, Hegel does not think that “*might is right*,” but that freedom should govern our social and political lives. In his view, however, genuine freedom is guaranteed not by democracy as such but by a free and rational constitution, the rights it secures, and the ethical disposition that it produces in its citizens.

<sup>25</sup> The National Socialists gained 107 seats in the Reichstag in September 1930 (out of 577) and 230 in July 1932 (out of 608). See Bullock 1962, 161, 216–17, 230.

PART IV

*Philosophy of Absolute Spirit*



*The “Absoluteness” of Hegel’s Absolute Spirit**Angelica Nuzzo*

As natural, intuitive, and commonsense as it may be for the interpreter to refer to “the Absolute” in Hegel’s philosophy as a clearly identifiable concept and even as a substantive entity of some kind, a quick terminological survey of his works should already convince us of the contrary. Such a survey would allow us to easily ascertain that Hegel always employs the term “absolute” as a noun with the greatest restraint, and that when he does use it in such a way, he either accompanies the term by careful qualifications or employs it in a critical, even polemical function, generally aimed at specific contemporary or past occurrences (prominently, although not exclusively, Schelling and Spinoza). On the other hand, the dearth of the term as a noun – “the Absolute” – is counterbalanced by the wide-ranging employment of the adjective – “absolute” – which appears in every sphere of Hegel’s philosophical system. Herein the adjective (and the adverb) plays a crucial role, first and foremost, in specifying in a systematically distinctive way the validity of notions that are otherwise disconcertingly ubiquitous and ambiguous in Hegel’s philosophy – notions, that is, such as concept, idea, spirit, unity, and truth, to name just a few. On this terminological basis, following a persuasive suggestion by John Burbidge (who himself responds to an original hint by Eric Weil (Burbidge 1997, 33)), I have argued that contrary to what many interpreters seem to assume, there is simply no original, substantive “Absolute” in Hegel’s philosophy, but that the adjective “absolute” (along with the adverb) is instead a systematically crucial, topological predicate that indicates the “place” or position of a certain determination or concept (and its reality) within the overall structure of philosophical thinking. Moreover, this position is not a static point or marker within a given whole but is rather a dynamical stage in the process through which the whole of philosophy is first constituted in the form of a complete system. This is, to be sure, the first step in a broader discussion that leads to the further question of what warrants the designation of “absolute” for a certain moment within



such a process. In other words, what is it that makes a certain moment at stake at a specific stage of the systematic constitution of the whole of Hegel's philosophy an "absolute" moment? And, furthermore, is the "absoluteness" of all "absolute" structures and concepts the same?

A cursory overview of the division of Hegel's system allows us to pinpoint the most salient moments deserving the designation of "absolute": "absolute knowing" (*absolutes Wissen*) is the conclusion of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*; the "absolute idea" (*absolute Idee*) is the culmination of the *Science of Logic*; and "absolute spirit" (*absoluter Geist*) is the last sphere of the Philosophy of Spirit, and with it, at the same time, the final moment of the entire encyclopedic system as a constituted whole. In connection with the claim mentioned earlier, which underscores the primacy of the adjectival and adverbial use of the term over the substantive use, this observation allows one to conclude that the absoluteness at stake as a topological predicate within the systematic process is the absoluteness that always characterizes the *end*, the final stage or the *result* of a discrete movement. The end of the phenomenological experience of consciousness, the end of the logical determination-process of pure thinking, the end of the progressive actualization of spirit – these are all moments in which the predicate "absolute" intervenes as a signpost in order to mark a conclusion and, precisely for this reason, the radical change of scene that marshals in the beginning of a new process (these are, respectively, the beginning of the Logic after the end of the *Phenomenology*, the beginning of the Philosophy of Nature and of the *Realphilosophie* more generally after the end of the Logic).<sup>1</sup> But why is it that the final stage (and this only) deserves to be indicated as absolute in the true sense?

Whereas the absoluteness of phenomenological knowing and that of the logical idea have occupied me in previous studies (Nuzzo 2003a; 2005), in the present essay I want to take up this constellation of questions and develop it further with regard to the specific issue of the absoluteness proper to Hegel's "absolute spirit" as the final stage of the development of spirit but also of the philosophical system as a whole. To this aim, at the center of my analysis will be the immanent process by which the figure of "absolute spirit" obtains from "objective spirit" in the 1830 *Encyclopaedia* (*Enc.* §§551–52), i.e., the transition from its last moment, namely, *Weltgeschichte*. The question herein concerns, in the first place, the way in which world history yields to a certain modality of self-knowledge that is "absolute" in the sense of belonging to the figure of "absolute spirit" (and

<sup>1</sup> I will address the question of what follows the end of absolute spirit in the conclusion of this essay.

no longer to the partiality and limitation characterizing the different *Volksgeister*). The further issue, however, proper this time to the new systematic sphere (*Enc.* §553), concerns, specifically, the absoluteness that art, religion, and philosophy are appointed to carry out and further develop *within* – yet also *beyond* and somehow *independently of* – world history. Indeed, "absolute spirit" is both the end of objective spirit, still appearing within world history, and the beginning of the new sphere entitled precisely "absolute spirit" – although, as we shall see, spirit's absoluteness is not the same in the two occurrences. In short, spirit's absoluteness designates both an accomplished result (of *Weltgeschichte*) and a new task (for art, religion, philosophy) – the latter following importantly from the former.<sup>2</sup> In order to tackle these issues, however, in the first part of the essay I will lay out some relevant aspects of the philosophical constellation in which I place Hegel's use of the predicate "absolute" when the development of spirit's reality is at stake.

### **"Absolute" as Reason's Predicate: Two Meanings in Kant's Aftermath**

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant begins the first book of the Transcendental Dialectic by indicating the specific nature of the concepts of reason (*Vernunftbegriffe*) as they differ from the understanding's concepts (or categories), and by indicating the former specifically as "ideas" ("in general": *CPR* B368ff./A312ff.). Kant's work in these famous introductory sections is first and foremost terminological since the most general task therein is to find a place within the philosophical tradition for the critique of metaphysics undertaken in his Transcendental Dialectic. Hence Kant's famous reference to Plato's ideas in the aftermath of which he now locates his notion of *Vernunftbegriff* (Heimsoeth 1965; Nuzzo 2001; 2003b). But as the further step in this discussion is to lead to the introduction of reason's properly "transcendental" ideas (*CPR* B377ff./A321ff.), Kant dwells on an important terminological digression, which regards, this time, the adjective "*absolut*" in its original and constitutive connection with the notion of idea.

Transcendental ideas are peculiar a priori concepts that have their origin in reason's distinctive activity of drawing syllogistic inferences on the basis of the understanding's concepts. Since reason thereby aims at the complete "totality of conditions" unachievable by the understanding, ideas always

<sup>2</sup> Presently, I shall dwell on the former rather than on the latter. For the latter, see Nuzzo 2006.

concern the “unconditioned” (*Unbedingtes*) (CPR B379/A322). On the basis of the relation between reason’s activity and the understanding’s categories, Kant contends, “we must seek an unconditioned, first, for the categorical synthesis in a *subject*, second, for the hypothetical synthesis of the members of a *series*, and third for the disjunctive synthesis of the parts in a *system*” (CPR B379/A323). This is the basic template on which the Transcendental Dialectic successively develops its division, which entails, at the same time, the critique of traditional metaphysics, i.e., of the unconditioned hypostatized, respectively, in the subject (psychology), in the world as *totum* (cosmology), and in god (theology). Ultimately, it is clear that these are the three (substantial) “absolutes” of dogmatic metaphysics. More originally or transcendently, however, they constitute the way in which reason proceeds to the unconditioned through different types of syllogistic inferences. The first regards a subject that is no longer a predicate of something else; the second regards a presupposition that in turn presupposes nothing; the third regards the structure of a unique system, i.e., “an aggregate of members of a division” that is complete. It is not difficult to see, and I will hint at this later, that under these three guises Kant’s unconditioned, which is the unconditioned of reason’s ideas, displays crucial features constitutive of Hegel’s notion of spirit once the transcendental framework of Kant’s critique of reason is replaced by the perspective of dialectic-speculative reason.

Now, there is a philosophically commonsense way to designate the character that generically accompanies the subject that can never, in turn, be the predicate of something else, the supreme condition that itself escapes all further condition, and the highest collection of members to which no other member can be added – and this is the designation of “absolute.” In effect, at this point, Kant pauses in his presentation of reason’s transcendental inferences in order to offer a terminological clarification that concerns precisely the adjective “absolute,” its original meaning and its different uses. It is important to stress that what is at stake in this connection, which regards not only the way reason’s concepts or ideas are obtained, but also reason’s peculiar form of activity always aimed at the “unconditioned,” is the adjective and not the noun – “*absolut*” and not “*das Absolute*.” That reason’s unconditioned is not outright “the absolute” (of metaphysics) is a claim that Kant takes for granted. For if it were “the absolute,” there would be no transcendental dialectic: the metaphysical hypostatization would be there from the start, and reason would deserve no legitimate use as its inferences would be outright correctible errors, not a necessary and unavoidable illusion (or reason’s “peculiar fate,” as it were).

In the case of the adjective "absolute," the focus is on a qualification that while seemingly not adding anything substantial to the concept at stake (the notion of "subject," for example), and only enhancing its validity on an axiological scale by positing it as the apex of an apparently continuous chain of inferences (namely, as the subject that is not, in turn, predicate of something else), illicitly changes the nature of that very concept. In other words, there is a dialectical trick embedded in the use of the adjective, the exposition of which Kant takes as his task in this part of the *Critique*. Accordingly, as the use of the adjective entails the faulty process in which speculative reason naturally engages, its analysis becomes the catalyst for the specifically 'critical' validity of Kant's theory.

Kant maintains that since "the common title of all concepts of reason" is here taken to be "the totality of conditions and the unconditioned," "we once again run up against an expression that we cannot dispense with and at the same time we cannot safely use because of an ambiguity it has acquired through long misuse" (*CPR* B380/A324). The problem is that the link between the predicate "absolute" and reason's ideas is so strong and unique (since no other term captures that link as adequately) that the ambiguity of the former, due to its current "vacillating use," risks leading to "the loss of the concept itself" (i.e., the concept "idea"). In order to counter that risk, then, here is the distinction that Kant draws by contrasting the current employment of the term to the original meaning – the meaning that he aims at restoring against the former with his notion of transcendental idea. "The word *absolute* is now more often used merely to indicate that something is valid of a thing considered *in itself* [*von einer Sache an sich selbst betrachtet*] and thus *internally*." Kant's example is the expression "absolutely possible," which, he notices, is "the least one can say of an object" if "absolute" is taken as simply meaning that a thing is "possible in itself (internally)" (*CPR* B381/A324). This simplifying and reductive contemporary use is based on the perspective whereby a thing is taken in its utter isolation – as *ab-solutus* – from all connections and relations, hence is viewed only "*an sich selbst*" or "internally." In contrast to this isolationist and abstract employment, whereby not much is said of a thing beyond the refusal of engaging in a comparative or relational account, Kant sets the second meaning of the predicate "absolute." He notices that this term "is also sometimes used to indicate that something is valid *in every relation* (unlimitedly) [*uneingeschränkt*]," as in the case of "absolute dominion" (*absolute Herrschaft*). Going back to the modal example just offered, "*absolutmöglich*" would indicate that which "is possible in all respects in every relation [*in aller Absicht in aller Beziehung*]" – and this

is, obviously, the most that can be said regarding the possibility of a thing (CPR B381/A324). The procedure that underlies this second use of the term is the opposite of the first. In this case, absoluteness is a function of the complete engagement in all relations and all respects, not the abstraction (or absolution, as it were) from all relations and respects (which is what “*an sich selbst*” or “internally” indicates). Moreover, it is easy to see how the first meaning of the adjective – absolute as “in itself” – can lead seamlessly to the substantive “the absolute,” which is ultimately what explicitly happens in the hypostatization taking place in the ontological proof of God’s existence.<sup>3</sup>

Leaving aside Kant’s broader aim in this immediate discussion (which turns, significantly, to the inference from what is absolutely possible to what is absolutely necessary), it suffices here to mention the following programmatic statement:

It is in this extended meaning that I will make use of the word absolute, opposing it to what is merely comparative or valid in some peculiar respect; for the latter is restricted to conditions, while the former is valid without any restriction [*ohne Restriktion*]. (CPR B382/A326)

Abandoning the current use, whereby the predicate “absolute” implies the limitation to the “*an sich*” of things, but also, more generally, a limited comparative account, Kant fully endorses the “extended” meaning – absolute as extended to the account of *all* relations and *all* respects. In this sense, what is valid absolutely is the opposite of what is valid only comparatively. It means “unlimitedly” (*uneingeschränkt*) (CPR B381/A324) or not restricted to and by any condition, which leads Kant back to reason’s ideas as concepts of the “unconditioned.” Accordingly, employing the adjective “absolute” to indicate reason’s activity, Kant offers the following definition of its transcendental ideas: “a transcendental concept of reason always goes to the absolute totality of the synthesis of conditions, and never ends except with the absolutely unconditioned, i.e., what is unconditioned in every relation [*bei dem schlechthin, d.i. in jeder Beziehung, Unbedingten*]” (CPR B382/A326). The unconditioned of reason’s ideas is “absolute” not merely in itself but in the extended sense of being so in *all* relations and *all* respects, and of not being restricted by

<sup>3</sup> See CPR B626/A598: the starting point of Kant’s argument is the claim that *Sein* is only “*die Position eines Dinges . . . an sich selbst*,” i.e., without relation to my concept. See Doz 1996, 6f., for the use of the term “absolute” in Saint Anselm and Saint Thomas, who prepare the transition to the substantive “the absolute” with regard to God, i.e., show the point of convergence between the absolute and the divine.

any condition. The question herein concerns a transition that Kant seems to take for granted or leave, at least, unspoken. *Why* is that which "is valid *in every relation*" (CPR B381/A324) also "valid *without any restriction*" (CPR B382/A326) so that both perspectives ultimately converge in the notion of the "unconditioned"? What is the ground of that convergence? It should be noted that the "extended" meaning that Kant endorses is opposed *both* to the abstract absoluteness of the mere *an sich*, wherein all comparison as such is excluded, *and* to the partially comparative use whereby "valid in some peculiar respect [*in besonderer Rücksicht*]" is contrasted to "valid without any restriction" (CPR B382/A326) or "valid *in every relation*" (CPR B381/A324). In other words, "absolute" in the extended sense that Kant endorses is that for which a *complete* and *exhaustive* comparison has taken place and it is that which emerges from such a *complete* comparison. And since "absolute" is thereby opposed to "comparative," this seems to amount to the overcoming of the comparative perspective as such. Why is this the case?

As unsatisfactory as my strategy may appear at this point, I will abandon Kant's discussion here – leaving also the question unanswered from his part.<sup>4</sup> What I will do instead is seek Hegel's own answer to this Kantian question. For Kant, just as for Hegel, the problem consists in how to think that "unlimited" or "unrestricted" whole which is not an abstract *an sich*, *ab-solutus* from all relations (which can easily be turned into a substantive "absolute") but results, instead, precisely from its extension to *all* relations on the basis of a specific activity of reason. This is clearly not a problem for those positions that endorse the first use of the adjective "absolute." And yet, for Kant, as crucial as the second meaning is recognized for his conception of reason's concepts, it also indicates an unnegotiable cognitive limit. Paradoxically, the unlimited point hinted at by reason's quest for the unconditioned is itself the limit of our human reason's cognitive endeavor. This Kant expresses with the claim that posits the use of reason's concepts as "transcendent." As reason leaves to the understanding everything that is concerned with objects of intuition, hence with possible experience, and reserves for itself the "absolute totality" in the use of the understanding's concepts, it stretches the synthetic unity thought under the category up to the "*Schlechthinunbedingte*" (CPR B383/A326). The result is the transcendental idea. The difference between the "unity of understanding" and the

<sup>4</sup> To do otherwise would require a thorough discussion of the Transcendental Dialectic. At stake here is the same problem of systematic completeness that is at the center of Kant's argument concerning the Ideal of pure reason.

“unity of reason” in appearances, i.e., the difference between a category and an idea, is that the former is conditioned, the latter is absolute. As reason relates only to the understanding, never immediately to experience, attempting to comprehend all the understanding’s actions in one “absolute whole,” the “objective use” of the concepts of reason is always “transcendent” (the concept of absolute unity is not a concept of experience), while the use of the understanding’s concepts “must always be immanent” (*CPR* B383/A327). Such transcendence with regard to experience (hence the lack of objective reality and validity) is the limit of speculative reason’s quest for absoluteness.

### The Experience of Spirit: Becoming Absolute

I shall now turn to Hegel’s answer. The framework is given by Kant’s clarification of the connection between the adjectival use of the predicate “absolute” and the notion of transcendental idea. Herein I take up the question raised earlier of why that which “is valid *in every relation*” (*CPR* B381/A324) is also “valid *without any restriction*” (*CPR* B382/A326) so that the two converge in indicating the candidate for the predication of absoluteness. Why does the totality of relations amount to an *Aufhebung* of limitation as such, to an overcoming of the comparative perspective *tout court*? I want to underline, from the outset, Hegel’s fundamental agreement with Kant’s endorsement of the second use of “absolute” against the first. Ultimately, this agreement explains Hegel’s famous attack against Schelling’s (substantive) Absolute in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, which is, to be sure, only a necessary corollary following from the perspective Hegel establishes in order to present his own idea of philosophical knowledge thereby addressing the Kantian problem. I want to call attention to a few famous passages from the Preface, which I will now read in light of Kant’s discussion previously analyzed. Significantly, these are also some of those rare passages in which Hegel uses the term “absolute” critically as a noun as he refers to the contemporary views he intends to refute with the new conception of science and philosophical knowledge put forth in the 1807 work.<sup>5</sup>

Let me begin with the most well known of all the well-known passages: “*Das Wahre ist das Ganze*” (*PhG*, MM 3:24). Hegel starts where Kant has left off. As the object of science and scientific knowledge, truth is the

<sup>5</sup> For Hegel’s relation to Schelling in this passage, with regard to the use of the term “absolute,” see Burbidge 1997, 24. See also Doz 1996, 5, for the reference to Spinoza, and more generally for useful hints regarding the history of the word “absolute.”



whole – it is that “absolute whole” that Kant sees as distinctively proper to speculative reason over and beyond the understanding and its limits (*CPR* B383/A327). For Hegel this whole *becomes* “absolute” as “the essence completing itself through its own development [*Entwicklung*].” The whole of truth is, fundamentally, a *process*. In the case of Kant, it is allegedly the process of reason’s syllogistic activity, which stretches the understanding’s cognition to the unconditioned (but in this way does not reach truth, which remains immanent within the province of the understanding). In the case of Hegel, it is a process of self-realization and self-development. Thus, the (absolute) whole of truth is not an absolute position, given or attained once and for all in its self-contained completeness (as if obtained from the famous sudden “pistol shot” or from the immediacy of an intellectual intuition – *PhG*, MM 3:31; Di Giovanni 1997); it is, instead, the “result,” and properly the “end,” of a discrete, discursive movement of self-development. Indeed, Hegel suggests that if one were to speak of the “absolute” as a self-completing essence (here one must underline the hypothetical stance whereby Hegel imports the terms of the contemporary discussion into the new framework of his own idea of philosophical science with an introductory intent similar to Kant’s in the analyzed passage), then one must certainly say of the “absolute that it is essentially *result*, and that only at the *end* it is what is in truth” (*PhG*, MM 3:24). This is the crucial error of Schelling’s conception of the Absolute as a substantive essence, namely, the fact that the Absolute is placed as the beginning.<sup>6</sup> As a beginning, however, the absolute is properly not “absolute” since anything deserving that predicate *becomes* such only as a *result*. Or, alternatively, if it is “absolute” (this time in the sense of the isolated *ab-solutus* or *an sich*, which Kant indicates as the first meaning of the adjective), then there is properly no process, hence nothing that truly begins, and since truth is process, truth is absent in this perspective. For, as Kant has already warned, in this position the absolute is only that which is abstractly considered “in itself” or “internally” – a very poor determination that, in its generality, is the least that can be said of a thing.<sup>7</sup> To be sure, however, it is only as such a contradictory beginning (i.e., as a beginning that begins nothing because it defies the idea of a process of which it is allegedly posited as the beginning) that the absolute can be conceived as a noun. Hence Hegel’s conclusion is clear from the outset: if truth is a whole, and the whole is

<sup>6</sup> I capitalize here the Absolute when referred to Schelling (or more general to non-Hegelian metaphysical positions); I do not capitalize it when reporting Hegel’s own mention of the noun.

<sup>7</sup> See *PhG*, MM 3:24f., for Hegel’s analogous claim.



a process, namely, a discrete movement that has, at least, a beginning and an end, then nothing absolute and no Absolute can constitute the beginning; the only position that can claim to be absolute is the result, but this, in turn, cannot be a substantive absolute (a noun). Absolute can only be the adjectival qualification of the totality of truth (and of truth as a whole) reached as the end and end-result of the complete process of its self-development. And with this conclusion Hegel is indeed, somehow, very close to Kant. But what kind of process is the self-development through which the totality of truth is constituted, in the end, as absolute? This is the question in which Hegel now translates the issue I raised earlier concerning Kant's idea of reason's unconditioned: why is that which is "valid *in every relation*" unlimitedly, i.e., unconditionally valid, hence "absolute"?

Two points should be underlined in this regard. First, for Hegel the essence that completes itself as the totality of truth in a movement of self-development is, as such, properly "subject." It is the subject in charge – and capable – of its own self-development. Hegel suggests that if we consent on calling that essence "the absolute," then the "need to represent the absolute as subject," which by religion means "god," is indeed satisfied (*PhG*, MM 3:26). Second, the process through which the totality constitutes itself as a final result (hence as properly absolute) is a process of actualization, i.e., is the process through which truth is no longer an abstraction or a generality (a mere ineffectual *an sich*) but a real position – in knowledge as well as in existence. Hegel expresses both points in the following well-known programmatic statement: "That the true is actual only as a *system*, or that substance is essentially *subject*, is expressed in the representation that articulates the absolute as spirit . . . The spiritual alone is the *actual* [*das Geistige allein ist das Wirkliche*]" (*PhG*, MM 3:28 – emphasis added; see the parallel passage *Enc.* §14). In this passage, Hegel can be seen as taking up the results of Kantian reason's inferences. Recall Kant's general presentation of reason's syllogisms: "we must seek an unconditioned, first, for the categorical synthesis in a *subject*, second, for the hypothetical synthesis of the members of a *series*, and third for the disjunctive synthesis of the parts in a *system*" (*CPR* B379/A323). The absolute subject, the absolute whole of reality (or the world), the unity of the system are, programmatically, speculative reason's aims. *Geist* is now Hegel's name for the subject that engages in the ongoing process of its own development and actualization (in the world), and in the end generates the complete system of truth as the result, thereby finally attaining the position of absoluteness. Accordingly, on Hegel's view, it is spirit as the result of

such a process that finally deserves the predicate "absolute." Crucial in this account is, first, the fact that the process at stake reaches the systematic form (i.e., the systematic whole or totality) only once it is exhausted in its *completeness*, i.e., only once *all* members of the series have been cycled through (in spirit's or consciousness's experience).<sup>8</sup> This totality – and this totality only – is properly "absolute." Short of that, we have only a one-sided, partial (or comparative) truth, only a limited, finite (or conditioned) subject that is still only an "*Ansich*," still a mere "*Inneres*" that as such lacks actuality and falls short of what "spirit" truly and fully is (*PhG*, MM 3:30f.). But crucial is also, second, the fact that the process of spirit's self-development, being a process of actualization or *Verwirklichung*, is an *immanent* and not a transcendent process. It is a process immanent within experience since through it the "experience" of consciousness is produced as a complete and thoroughgoing systematic whole, and is a process immanent within reality and the world since through it reality itself is produced (as spiritual, historical, social reality). Indeed, as Hegel contends, "[d]as Geistige allein ist das Wirkliche" (*PhG*, MM 3:28; see also *Enc.* §6). On this point, however, Hegel's spirit and Kant's speculative reason part ways. For the absoluteness of the former is always and necessarily immanent (in reality, in the world, and in experience), while that of the latter remains inevitably transcendent (see *CPR* B383/A327).

On Hegel's account, spirit in its mere "*Ansich*" must become external to itself, giving expression to that "in itself," thereby becoming "for itself" ("*Dies Ansich hat sich zu äussern und für sich selbst zu werden*": *PhG*, MM 3:31). In agreement with Kant, Hegel claims that no "*an sich*" as such can be said to be truly absolute. For Hegel, this is the case because spirit in its *Ansich* has to engage in the externality of the world, in the complete series of relations from which alone it can eventually emerge as absolute – indeed, as proven and "valid in every relation" (*CPR* B381/A324). Accordingly, the movement of self-development that establishes truth as a whole or as a system (or, with Kant, as "absolute totality"), and furthermore establishes the essence or substance as "subject" (*PhG*, MM 3:28) is the process whereby that which is merely "in itself" becomes "for itself" as it engages all possible external relations (all epistemological and practical positions as successive stations or moments of consciousness's experience),

<sup>8</sup> "Consciousness" is the first, "immediate *Dasein* of spirit," and the science that follows the process whereby all the limited figures of consciousness are gone through in their limitation is the "science of the experience that consciousness undergoes" (*PhG*, MM 3:38).

eventually taking up within itself all possible positions and their opposite. This is the movement of spirit's actualization, the structure of which is Hegel's dialectic. It is the process in which each successive limiting, finite condition is overcome in its being a limiting condition (i.e., in its implying a determinate negation) by being taken up within the position it is meant to negate. This is the meaning of dialectical *Aufhebung* and the logic by which consciousness's phenomenological progress is successively presented up to the conclusive figure of "absolute knowing."

It is here that we find Hegel's answer to Kant's problem. Recall the question I raised earlier with regard to Kant's analysis of the meaning of "absolute": why is that which "is valid *in every relation*" (CPR B381/A324) also "valid *without any restriction*" (CPR B382/A326) so that both ultimately converge in reason's "unconditioned"? Hegel's answer is that what has proved itself true by coming out of its mere *an sich* and by engaging in *all* relations (hence traversing the complete series of consciousness's experiences and fully confronting the externality of the world), i.e., what has proved valid in the face of all possible objection or negation, is also that which has overcome all the successive limitations that each relation or negation represents.<sup>9</sup> Throughout this process, spirit's knowing has become truly "absolute" in Kant's second sense of the predicate "absolute." At this point, in the figure of "*absolute Wissen*," which is the result of the phenomenological process in its entirety, spirit has overcome all limitations as it has taken them up as constitutive within itself. In the figure of "absolute knowing," we reach the subject that in the perfect circularity of self-knowledge (hence in the form of a complete system of experiences) is not a predicate of something else. We reach the point in which thinking as pure thinking is truly "presuppositionless" beyond all opposition of consciousness (and this is the beginning of the *Logic*: WL, MM 5:45).<sup>10</sup> This is precisely the way in which the absolute totality is constituted in Hegel's phenomenological dialectic in the 1807 work. But it is also the paradigm according to which, in the later philosophical system, starting with the *Science of Logic*, the absoluteness of every conclusive systematic moment is achieved. That which has gone through *all* relations has also overcome the limitation (and the negation) that each relation or determination represents, and is, therefore, "unlimited," hence "absolute" (in Kant's

<sup>9</sup> In the *Phenomenology*, Hegel presents this movement as the "*sich vollbringender Skeptizismus*" (PhG, MM 3:72) – in short, as skepticism that overcomes itself by successively exhausting all possible objections to a given position.

<sup>10</sup> See CPR V B379/A323, commented on earlier.

second sense of the predicate “absolute”). In this position, however, the absoluteness of Hegel’s spirit is *not* the same as the absoluteness characterizing the “unconditioned” of Kant’s speculative reason. Although all the limiting conditions are finally overcome, they are still immanently present within spirit’s experience and actuality – they are overcome but not left behind once and for all; they are overcome but not properly transcended. The transcendence of Kantian reason’s unconditioned is utterly foreign to the immanence – indeed to the worldliness – that always and necessarily affects the absoluteness of Hegel’s spirit. Spirit is absolute *within*, *not beyond experience and actuality*.

At this point, I want to turn to Hegel’s later *Encyclopaedia*, and examine, in particular, the transition from *Weltgeschichte*, the final moment of “objective spirit,” to “absolute spirit” as the last sphere of the Philosophy of Spirit and of the philosophical system as a whole. At this stage, “absolute spirit” appears, first, as the conclusive figure that seals the movement of world history. On this basis, it constitutes the overall realm in which the highest mode of spiritual self-knowledge acquires different forms of adequate reality in the creations of art, in the activity of religion, and in the works of philosophy (*Enc.* §553; Nuzzo 2006; 2012). My task in the last section of this essay is to see how the general conception underlying Hegel’s use of the predicate “absolute,” discussed earlier, along with its Kantian ascendancy, are brought to bear on the development of this last crucial moment of the *Encyclopaedia*.

### Spirit’s Absoluteness in and beyond History

Let me sum up, first, the crucial characters that the predicate “absolute” confers to spirit on the basis of the view articulated above. Spirit is absolute when its self-development has taken on – i.e., has successively confronted and overcome – the complete series of all possible limitations and negations, finally assimilating them as constitutive of its own reality, activity, and self-cognition. Spirit is absolute since its claim has been proven valid, as Kant put it, “in all respects in every relation” (*CPR* B381/A324). Moreover, spirit is absolute as its process of actualization and self-knowledge has reached its final stage so that the *Ansich* of spirit, having been fully translated in the exteriority of the world, has come back, circularly, to itself, to its accomplished *Fürsich*. Finally, through this process, spirit’s absoluteness is rendered *immanent* in spirit’s reality and experience – a reality that now is constituted as the complete *system* of spirit’s forms and as spirit’s own “world” (see *Enc.* §6). All these features

we now see at play in the way in which the figure of “absolute spirit” is explicitly presented under this title in the transition from world history to the final sphere of Hegel’s 1830 *Encyclopaedia* (*Enc.* §§550–52). In what follows, however, my discussion of this transition will be limited to one crucial point.<sup>11</sup> There is a sense in which history represents, at the same time, the most powerful limiting condition of spirit’s overall development and the highest objective modality of freedom’s actualization. The emergence of spirit’s absoluteness is the result of the act whereby spirit comes to negotiate this contradiction, reconfiguring it according to the modality that is to dominate the last sphere of Hegel’s system. Accordingly, the overall task of the last division of Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia* can be framed precisely in terms of such a contradiction.<sup>12</sup> At the end of objective spirit, history is the manifestation of spirit’s alienation and exteriority, of its being prey to the highest conflicts and contradictions, of its falling back into the sort of open-ended “state of nature” among nation-states, which not even international right is able to definitively settle. However, at the same time, history is spirit’s most extensive process of liberation and universalization, and is the ultimate objective dimension in which spirit places the articulation of the highest forms of self-cognition, namely, art, religion, and philosophy. The point is that as much as spirit, at the end of the development of ethical life, is set to overcome the highest limiting condition in order to posit itself as truly absolute, the actual manifestation of such absoluteness does not take place beyond history but remains immanent within history. In other words, the contradiction that seemingly connects spirit’s history and its absoluteness is not solved by an act of transcendence. This, I suggest, is the fundamental predicament of the figure of “absolute spirit” given Hegel’s transformation of Kant’s notion of reason’s unconditioned, i.e., as we have seen, once this latter is rendered *immanent* within spirit’s reality, or when the claim concerns, specifically, the intra-historical absoluteness of spirit, not an absoluteness that is allegedly transcendent with regard to it. Moreover, at stake in this case is the predicate “absolute” as it concerns spirit’s practical freedom as well as the highest forms of spirit’s self-knowledge – both being realized together and reconciled *with* and *within* history.

<sup>11</sup> For a broader account of both this transition and the sphere of “absolute spirit,” see Nuzzo 2012.

<sup>12</sup> In other words, what “absolute spirit” turns out to be at the end of the sphere of objective spirit (*Enc.* §552) sets the stage for the development of the entire last sphere of the *Encyclopaedia* entitled “Absolute Spirit.”

In the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel first introduces the moment of "*allgemeine Weltgeschichte*" as the extension or universalization of the internal, local history that each *Volksgeist* simply "has" in virtue of its particularity as a "limited spirit [*beschränkter Geist*]" (*Enc.* §548). At stake herein is the movement leading from the predicament whereby spirit *has* a history (history being an attribute of spirit, among others), to spirit's *being* itself the broader actualization process that is world history (history indicating, in this case, the dynamic substantiality of spirit). The latter "movement," Hegel announces, is "the path of liberation [*Weg der Befreiung*] of the spiritual substance, the act [*Tat*] through which the absolute end [*Endzweck*] of the world is actualized in it." Describing a now familiar dialectical trajectory, this is the movement that brings spirit from its existence first only "*an sich*" to its "consciousness and self-consciousness, and thereby to the revelation [*Offenbarung*] and actuality of its essence that is now in and for itself [*an und für sich*]" (*Enc.* §549). Relevant in this way of presenting the movement of history is the fact that "universal world history," as the path of spirit's liberation from the limitations heretofore encountered within the realm of its ethical objectivity (which are natural and geographical as well as cultural, social, and political limitations), is successively described as the "act" or deed (*Tat*) (*Enc.* §549), the "action" (*Handlung*), and even the "work" (*Arbeit*) (*Enc.* §551) that fulfill and bring to actuality the "absolute end of the world" (*Enc.* §549). With regard to spirit's liberation, history is not a cognitive but a practical endeavor – and it is practical not only in the sense of *praxis* but also in the sense of *poiesis* – at this stage, specifically, in the sense of the poietic, productive activity that is "work" and implies the work–implement relation (*Enc.* §551: *Werkzeug*). In other words, it is not as speculative reason but as practical reason that Hegelian *Vernunft* is actualized in history (see *Enc.* §6R; *WL*, *MM* 5:45). This actualization means, then, that it is only when the two sides (cognitive and practical) are joined in their reconciled unity that spirit can achieve its true absoluteness. Moreover, unlike Kant, for whom the *Endzweck* of history is the moral good, Hegel posits that end as freedom itself, as the achievement of the "absolute" dimension of freedom. And in this regard, Hegel contends that the spiritual activity that is history, although eminently practical, is not consigned to spirit's strictly moral or even ethical *praxis* but rather to its *poiesis*. This is the link that leads from the "work" of history (or history as the work of spirit) to the work of art as one of the highest forms in which spirit's self-knowledge is actualized – this time in its truly absolute dimension. At the final stage of the development of objective spirit, however, the "final end" appears in the figure of "the

highest and absolute *right*" (*Enc.* §551), i.e., is still conceived in strictly juridical and ethical terms. This, however, is not yet the truly absolute dimension of spirit's freedom – that is, as such an end, freedom is still not valid "in all respects in all relations." For, in its alleged absoluteness, this right is still limited and conditioned, is still a contingent and arbitrary end as it is affected by the claim to the opposite, i.e., by the contradiction against which it violently exercises its "absolute right." This is clear, if not at the present moment, in which the leading *Volksgeist* imposes its "absolute will" and does so with "absolute right," certainly at a later historical moment, in which this right and will are overcome by another *Volksgeist* and thereby stripped of their alleged absoluteness (*Enc.* §550). To put this point in terms of Kant's analysis, in world history the "right" of the leading *Volksgeist* is still assessed only in a comparative way; its preeminence is only a transitory and one-sided, or a comparative one. Thus, in order to achieve the truly absolute dimension of its freedom, spirit's cognitive activity must join its practical one – consciousness and self-consciousness must be brought to bear on spirit's actuality, i.e., such actuality must be such that in it spirit achieves the highest form of self-knowledge, and, reciprocally, such self-knowledge must be acting in such a way so as to give itself the most adequate form of actuality. Only at this point will spirit fully deserve the predicate "absolute."

The limitation that still affects spirit as *Volksgeist*, i.e., as the protagonist and agent of world history, is, for one thing, a *practical* limitation insofar as spirit appears as a mere "instrument" of history, and its "subjectivity" is still subordinate to the historical substantiality which is the chief aim and content of the agent's work (*Enc.* §551). However, at this level, spirit's limitation is, in addition, a *cognitive* one as well. Internally, within the confines of ethical life, just as externally, in the often violent confrontations of different people and nations, the "subjective side" of spirit's life is "unconscious customs [*bewusstlose Sitte*]," and when consciousness is present, it is the consciousness of the contingency and transitory nature of the ethical content in relation both to "external nature" and to the "world" of other people and customs (*Enc.* §552). In effect, the fundamental aim of ethical life, of spirit's social and political institutions and customs, is not the fullness of spirit's self-knowledge. Accordingly, what spirit achieves within this sphere is, at the most, the consciousness of its own relativity and conditioned historical existence. On this basis, it is clear that spirit becomes absolute only when both limitations are overcome, i.e., only on the condition of becoming true "subject" – i.e., to put it in Kantian terms, subject of "unconditioned" action as well as subject of "unconditioned"



self-knowing.<sup>13</sup> Such movement of unification of practical and theoretical liberation – or the movement in which spirit finally *becomes absolute* – begins precisely in the act whereby the consciousness of spirit's own limitation is dialectically exposed. In history spirit becomes aware of the limitation, contingency, and finitude of its own ethical existence and action, i.e., of the reality that heretofore has been proved as the highest form of spirit's actualization.

At this point, Hegel suggests that it is precisely in the element of thinking and knowing and consciousness (in *Denken*, *Wissen*, and *Bewusstsein*) – not (yet) in action and not (yet) in reality – that spirit is able to overcome its objective limitations while *still within* the ethical world. For, while spirit's reality is still only the actuality of ethical life and world history, and while its action is still only the ethical (social, political, historical) action of the nation-state or the "work" of the individual *Volksgeist*, already at this level spirit's knowledge is beyond – and higher than – both because thinking has already overcome the finitude that characterizes both. "It is the *thinking* spirit in the ethical world [*der in der Sittlichkeit denkende Geist*] that overcomes in itself [*in sich aufhebt*] the finitude that it displays as *Volksgeist* in its state and its temporal interests, in the system of laws and customs." The *Aufhebung* of spirit's finitude, which is the finitude of its own ethical and historical reality as well as of its own action, is accomplished by the "*thinking* spirit" at work "in the ethical world," and takes place *in thinking* and knowing. Now such an *Aufhebung* is, at the same time, spirit's *Erhebung* to the form of "*Wissen seiner selbst in seiner Wesentlichkeit*." Spirit knows itself in its most essential dimension, i.e., ultimately in its freedom (for "freedom" is, most generally, the very "essence" of spirit: *Enc.* §382), neither in the positive structures and institutions of the ethical world nor in history, but in the conscious acknowledgment, *in thinking*, of their unavoidable finitude and limitation. Importantly, such finitude cannot be overcome within the ethical world and cannot be overcome in history but only *in thinking*. It is at this point that the figure of "absolute spirit" is first introduced. What we have here, first, is the "*Wissen des absoluten Geistes*" (*Enc.* §382) – wherein the genitive is both subjective and objective. Such *Wissen* is, subjectively, the knowing proper to spirit in its "absolute" figure, but is also, objectively, the knowledge of what it means for spirit to be finally absolute. And yet Hegel

<sup>13</sup> "Unconditioned" is clearly Kant's term; in the present connection, it has the meaning of "absolute" established above: spirit is absolute "in all respects," once all conditions are taken up within the reality of spirit itself.



seems reluctant to declare spirit absolute, and insists, instead, on the fact that though it is able to overcome its ethical and historical limitations, spirit's self-reflective knowing is still affected by the "*immanente Beschränkung*" of the *Volksgeist*. In fact, although spirit's first absoluteness is the absoluteness of a result (i.e., the result of the overall movement of objective spirit), what we have here is still not the *final* result but only the *Erhebung* to an absoluteness that spirit still has to fully conquer – still has to insert into reality, proving that its self-knowledge as well as its action do in effect live up to it (see *Enc.* §553). This is the open task of the last, final sphere of the Philosophy of Spirit. Again, this is the task of spirit in its *becoming absolute*. In other words, within the confines of *Sittlichkeit*, spirit *thinks* (and consciously acknowledges) its own finitude and in so doing overcomes it by raising beyond it; and yet, thinking still lacks the fundamental tools to articulate a vision of what it means to be "absolute" in the sense of really "unlimited," since thinking's horizon is still limited to the ethical world. Spirit must learn how to think beyond history while still living within it – it must learn how to be what it is (i.e., "absolute spirit") in the intuitive language of art, in the representational language of religion, and in the conceptual language of philosophy. This, and this only, is spirit's true – because truly final – absoluteness. Ultimately, it is the absoluteness of an open-ended task.

*Art as a Mode of Absolute Spirit:  
The Development and Significance of Hegel's  
Encyclopaedia Account of the Philosophy of Art*

*Allen Speight*

What is the place of art in Hegel's philosophy of spirit? At the end of the *Science of Logic*, Hegel offers a succinct characterization of the systematic role of art with respect to nature, spirit, religion, and the absolute Idea:

Nature and Spirit are in general different modes [*unterschiedene Weisen*] of presenting its existence [i.e., that of the Absolute Idea], art and religion its different modes of apprehending itself [*sich zu erfassen*] and giving itself an adequate existence [*ein sich angemessenes Dasein zu geben*]. Philosophy has the same content and the same end [*denselben Inhalt und denselben Zweck*] as art and religion; but it is the highest mode of apprehending the absolute Idea, because its mode is the highest mode, the Notion. (WL, SL 824)<sup>1</sup>

This bare-bones formulation may raise as many questions as it settles, and it is often glossed by reference to the only somewhat more expanded account that Hegel gave of art's role in the concluding sections on Absolute Spirit as that came to be sketched in the *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*.

Hegel's treatment of art in the *Encyclopaedia's* section on Absolute Spirit in its final (1827/30) form is only eight paragraphs, but it does contain arguably the most systematic and mature account Hegel gave of art, in particular, the relation between the philosophy of art and the philosophy of spirit.<sup>2</sup> While these paragraphs are often appealed to as providing the philosophical justification of Hegel's more wide-ranging treatment of artistic and aesthetic topics in the Berlin *Lectures on the Philosophy of Art*,

<sup>1</sup> "Die Natur und der Geist sind überhaupt unterschiedene Weisen, ihr Dasein darzustellen, Kunst und Religion ihre verschiedenen Weisen, sich zu erfassen und ein sich angemessenes Dasein zu geben; die Philosophie hat mit Kunst und Religion denselben Inhalt und denselben Zweck; aber sie ist die höchste Weise, die absolute Idee zu erfassen, weil ihre Weise, die höchste, der Begriff ist" (MM 6:548).

<sup>2</sup> In Speight 2015, I give an account of the first four paragraphs of this section as they appear in the 1830 version of the *Encyclopaedia*. The present essay focuses on the development of those paragraphs over the three iterations of the *Encyclopaedia* and the larger systematic conclusions about the relation between art and the philosophy of spirit that we can draw from this development.

their genesis has not received correspondingly much treatment – an unfortunate fact, since Hegel actually revised a number of elements of this eight-paragraph account as his view of the systematic place of art changed in significant ways over the decades following the publication of the final part of the *Science of Logic*. In particular, one can see over the three published versions of the *Encyclopaedia* (the 1817 Heidelberg version and the 1827 and 1830 Berlin versions) Hegel's attempts to resolve some of the more difficult *aporiai* raised by the positioning of art as a mode of Absolute Spirit.

This essay will examine the development of Hegel's views over the course of the *Encyclopaedia* treatments, as well as their relation to other key elements of Hegel's broader claims about aesthetics as they appear in the lectures and in other works. My claim is that it is Hegel's primary concern with the question of how we come to take ourselves as the self-conscious rational animals that we are as human beings that lies behind the series of crucial revisions that he undertook in working on these sections of the *Encyclopaedia*, and that those revisions bear an important relationship also to certain ways in which the *Aesthetics* lectures also came to be revised during the same period.

Examination of art's status within the context of the development of the *Encyclopaedia* account has certain advantages for the larger discussion of the relevant issues in Hegel scholarship. For one thing, it allows Hegel scholars a certain point of both clarity and fixity within the debates over the status of Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of art – in particular, those raised by the editorial work on the “standard edition” of the lectures done by Hegel's student Hotho.<sup>3</sup> While many claims have been made about the relation between the development of Hegel's own views and certain passages that can be found only in the “standard edition” (but not, for example, in student notes from specific iterations of Hegel's aesthetics courses), a careful look at the development of the *Encyclopaedia* passages can show important changes that can only be attributed to Hegel himself and how those changes correlate with what we know about the lecture series.<sup>4</sup> Reading the development of Hegel's views in this way will in fact

<sup>3</sup> Hegel gave four lecture courses in Berlin on the topic of the philosophy of art, which were edited by his student Hotho. Much scholarly discussion has arisen concerning Hotho's work as editor, and scholars have made important use of the notes which students took during these lecture series. Most of these lectures are still in German, but the 1823 series has been translated into English: see *LPhA*.

<sup>4</sup> The form of this concern has begun to change as more of the student transcripts have been published and Hotho's influence can be seen in better context. Despite the concerns raised about Hotho's editorial work, he did still have access to some crucial interpretive resources that contemporary

show the changes in his perspective on a set of elemental concerns that remain crucial to his philosophy of art over this period, including the relation between nature and spirit, the relation between art and the other modes of Absolute Spirit (religion and philosophy), the relation among the various dimensions of art (the artist, the spectator, and the artwork itself), and the relation among the three moments in Hegel's well-known history of art forms (symbolic, classical, and romantic).

In particular, it will be argued that an examination of the development of Hegel's treatment of art in its various formulations can be helpful in two important ways. First, across all the formulations, it is clear that for Hegel the most important systematic question with respect to art is not one concerning, say, distinctive modes of aesthetic receptivity or artistic production, but rather is the question of how art is – together with religion and philosophy – a central element of coming to terms with what he calls “the highest and absolute needs” of human thought. The importance of this question about art's systematic *place* – i.e., that art must be understood together with religion as having a philosophical purpose – can be seen most clearly across Hegel's various formulations, even as Hegel comes to articulate the distinctive status of art vis-à-vis religion and philosophy more carefully in the two later versions of the *Encyclopaedia*. Second, as is revealed by Hegel's most striking final insertion into his standing formulation about art's systematic place, the most important concrete developmental notion that Hegel thought important to retain at this level of concern with Absolute Spirit involves not the issue of artistic *genres* and their development over time but rather two questions that, I argue, guide Hegel's distinction among the art *forms*: namely, how artistic agency finds *satisfaction* in its works (loosely the question guiding the development from the symbolic to the classical form of art and related to the emergence of the *human being* as the proper content and shape of art), and what sort of *resistance* or *remainder* there is within art itself as a distinctive mode of Spirit that allows it to become a question for itself (the question behind the transition from classical to romantic).

scholars do not have, including his own first-hand experience of some of the lectures and the use of Hegel's own lecture manuscript (which unfortunately disappeared). On textual grounds, therefore, it would be difficult simply to ignore Hotho's edition, even if it is important (as in comparative work on the Gospels) to grant a different status to those passages which appear across all or most versions of the student notes. If the landscape for scholarly analysis of Hegel's philosophy of art has been in flux, the strongest argument for the importance of the eight-paragraph version of the philosophy of art in the *Encyclopaedia* is that it allows us to see in the most concise form precisely the conceptual issues that Hegel framed in the ultimate versions of the *Encyclopaedia* that might be most important for understanding the systematic place of art within the most finished version of his work.

## I The 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the 1817 (Heidelberg) *Encyclopaedia*

There are a number of key elements formative for the ultimate shape of Hegel's philosophy of art in the *Encyclopaedia* that can be seen in works that straddle the passage from the 1816 *Science of Logic* with which we began. Although it is his later Berlin period (1818–31) that has received the most scholarly attention when it comes to Hegel's philosophy of art, Hegel's Jena (1801–7) and Heidelberg (1816–18) periods are important to examine for his later account of art and the philosophy of spirit. It is particularly of interest that this pre-Berlin period is characterized, both before and after the publication of the *Science of Logic*, by Hegel's treatment of the systematic place of art within a basically two- (and not a three-) part account: in both the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the 1817 *Encyclopaedia*, art is not yet a separate part of the familiar triad of art/religion/philosophy but is treated as part of the larger account of *religion* and its transition to philosophy.

### 1.1 *The Account of Art in the Phenomenology of Spirit*

Although the *Phenomenology of Spirit* account is often ignored in discussions of Hegel's aesthetics, the role that *Kunstreligion* plays within its Chapter VII on "Religion" – as the decisive medial moment in the development from "natural" to "manifest" (*offenbar*) religion – is testament to how Hegel's emerging thought about the origins of art as a human activity provides a key of sorts to understanding the progression of his own understanding of the relation between the human and the divine.<sup>5</sup> There are several important facets of this early treatment of art in the context of religion, but for our purposes three are most critical for the later development of Hegel's philosophy of art. The first facet is emphasized by his placing art in sufficiently close connection to religion in order to see that art, on Hegel's view, is not something which should be best approached simply in terms of notions like aesthetic receptivity or sensibility (i.e., the predominant view of Hegel's predecessors in eighteenth-century aesthetics), but rather must be seen as something which must (as Hegel would later say) "proceed from a higher impulse and . . . satisfy higher needs – at times the highest and absolute needs since it is bound up with the most universal views of life and the religious interests of whole epochs and

<sup>5</sup> For a more complete account of this development, see Speight 2017.

peoples” (*LFA* I:30).<sup>6</sup> The second is that it is precisely artistic activity which allows for the most important features of the development that occurs within the history of religions – namely, the transformation from “natural” to “manifest” or “revealed” religion: Hegel’s stress in this account is very much on the role of the artist himself as the figure whose increasingly self-reflective activity both opens up a critique of religion in its most naturalistic form and places a new emphasis on human agency as the motivating force in the development toward greater conceptual grasp of the life of spirit. On Hegel’s account in the *Phenomenology*, art is what allows religion itself to move in the direction of the demythologization required for the transition to “Absolute Knowing.” The third is that the three historical moments which Hegel sketches here – in the modes of natural religion, art religion, and manifest or revealed religion – already herald the dynamic behind the famous triad of the symbolic, classical, and romantic forms of art familiar to the final version of the *Encyclopaedia* and the aesthetics lectures.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.2 The Heidelberg Encyclopaedia

This embeddedness of art within a larger account of religion is maintained in the 1817 *Encyclopaedia*, where the third and final section of Hegel’s treatment of Spirit, “*Der absolute Geist*,” takes up sections devoted to “*die Religion der Kunst*” and “*die geoffenbarte Religion*” before turning in the final section to “*die Philosophie*.” In the context of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel now offers an explicit account of “Absolute Spirit” as such, and there are no detailed historical specifics or references to particular cultures of the sort in the detailed and allusive presentation in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but the overall structure is still of a move that embeds an account of art within the larger trajectory of the transition from religion to philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

The initial remarks about Absolute Spirit in the 1817 *Encyclopaedia* do not specifically mention art in any way, nor do they delineate distinctive features or ends associated with any of the different modes of Absolute Spirit as such. Instead, the focus is on the relationship of identity that

<sup>6</sup> *LFA* I:30. Although I am quoting in this context a passage from the later lectures, the perspective here is very much part of the *Phenomenology*’s view of the relation between art and religion.

<sup>7</sup> Although the three moments are similar, Hegel does not yet use the same terminology; in particular, the characterization of the pre-Greek moment as “symbolic” emerges in Hegel’s later Heidelberg period with his engagement with the work of his colleague Creuzer. See Speight 2018.

<sup>8</sup> It is true that Hegel’s structure does now have organizationally a triadic form, in that it is set up as three moments: (a), (b), and (c).

Hegel says now unfolds between the *concept* (*Begriff*) of spirit and its reality (*Realität*) in the knowledge of the absolute Idea. The connection between art and religion that is visible in the 1807 and 1817 accounts may be thought to represent an earlier view that Hegel outgrows. And yet, as we will see, the ultimate shape of the 1827/30 *Encyclopaedia* account of art (*Enc.* §§556–63) is itself also never introduced by any reference to art in Hegel's overall discussion of Absolute Spirit either. Hegel takes over the same initial sentence from 1817 in the two later versions ("the concept of Spirit has its reality in Spirit"), and not only does his final drafting of the paragraphs introducing Absolute Spirit in 1827/30 (*Enc.* 3 §§553–55) follow the lead of the 1817 Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia* (*Enc.* 3 §§453–55) by offering no explicit introduction to a discussion of artistic or aesthetic issues, they in fact now intensify the overall setting of the discussion on Absolute Spirit with regard to distinctively religious issues, as Hegel takes up such questions as the role of belief, the experience of the cultus, the nature of divine worship, etc. In a sense, these introductory paragraphs to the final versions of the Absolute Spirit introduction now actually make more sense as a development from the discussion in the *Encyclopaedia* paragraphs just previous to them that conclude the "Objective Spirit" section (in all three versions), which concerned the relation between ethical spirit and *religion* (in the 1827/30 versions, these are §§548–52).<sup>9</sup>

The first sentence of the 1817 Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia* paragraphs on "die Religion der Kunst" remains a template for both later Berlin versions of the *Encyclopaedia*: "The immediate shape [*Gestalt*] of this [absolute] knowledge is the shape of the *Anschauung* and *Vorstellung* of absolute Spirit as the Ideal" (*Enc.* §§453, 556). With the slight addition of two words, the 1827 version begins with this identical sentence,<sup>10</sup> and the 1830 version (as we will see in the next section) uses it as well as the underlying grammatical structure for a larger set of issues that Hegel chooses to add at that point. This addition on Hegel's part represents, however, something of an "interruption" of the basic claim of this foundational sentence.

The elements of this initial sentence that remain the same through all three versions underscore these important aspects of Hegel's view of art: the notion that art is an *immediate* mode of Absolute Spirit, the notion

<sup>9</sup> Such is the intimacy in Hegel's mind of these concerns that in the 1827 version, the long discussion of religion and the state that ultimately Hegel moved in the 1830 version to the end of Objective Spirit (in the long discussion of *Enc.* 3 §552) occurs in fact *within* the discussion of art, in a remark to §563, where Hegel introduces it as part of the "retrospective" side of art's development in relation to the state.

<sup>10</sup> In the 1827 version, Hegel adds the words *an sich* to modify "Absolute Spirit."

that art offers a *shape* (*Gestalt*) of absolute knowledge in the mode of intuition and representation, and finally the notion of the *Ideal*. With respect to art's immediacy as a mode of Absolute Spirit, Hegel emphasizes that, while art appears in the mode of external *Anschauung*, it will be construed according to a narrative that moves toward increasingly adequate (and ultimately more mediated) modes of the knowing of Absolute Spirit. With respect to the inherent shapefulness that is implicit in art, there is no more fundamental concern within Hegel's aesthetics than the relation between Idea and shape – this is precisely Hegel's notion of beauty (although it is only in the 1827/30 versions that Hegel makes this explicit in the first sentence itself).

In the paragraphs which immediately follow this initial articulation of the importance of the Ideal for art, the 1817 version also emphasizes in general terms a point which had emerged within the *Phenomenology of Spirit*'s account in its richer and more culturally specific context: namely, that the initial determinate shape of the divine captured in art is “an elementary or concrete natural being” which is dialectically bound up with a realm of abstract or shapeless (*gestaltlos*) thought about the divine in general. The *Phenomenology* had made clear this dialectical relationship between the natural forms appropriated by the earliest modes of religious experience and the highly abstract conceptions of the divine (from the Persian notion of “Light” or the abstract conception of the divine in Egyptian religion), but it also emphasized that such naturalistic forms are also now comprehended in a conceptual or spiritual mode: as Hegel now expresses it in the 1817 *Encyclopaedia*, the “truth” of these two sides (immediate natural form, abstract thinking) involved in the initial experience of the divine in art yields an awareness that the natural is now something which has come to have essentially spiritual (and not merely natural) content – it is, as Hegel states in a pregnant phrase, “the concrete shape that has been born out of Spirit itself [*die aus dem Geiste geborne concrete Gestalt*].” In this shape, natural immediacy is now only as a “sign of thought” (*Zeichen des Gedankens*) that is “freedom from its contingency and transfigured [*verklärt*]” in its expression in such a way that the shape “shows nothing else in itself” – i.e., the *Gestalt* of beauty (*Enc.* 3 §459).

In the paragraphs immediately following, the 1817 account draws from this definition of the shape of beauty what Hegel calls the ideal of aesthetic “interpenetrability” (*Durchdringung*) of form and content that remains crucial for the final two versions.<sup>11</sup> As Hegel presents it, this notion that

<sup>11</sup> For more on Hegel's employment of the ideal of interpenetrability, see Speight 2015.



an artistic shape “shows nothing else in itself” is on the one hand an evident limitation (it means that it is attached to a natural immediacy which can only be a “sign” of the idea), but on the other hand, the natural immediacy involved in art is “transfigured” in such a way that the shape which comes before the spectating subject is completely formed by spirit. (As he will put it in the later versions: “Beauty in general *goes no further than* an interpenetration of the vision or image by the spiritual principle”: *nur zur Durchdringung der Anschauung oder des Bildes durch das Geistige* (*Enc.* §559).)

A second ideal related to art that comes to be important in the later versions of the *Encyclopaedia* – what I have called the ideal of performative human agency, or the artist as ideal in his or her activity (*Handlung* or *Tätigkeit*), a goal that we might especially associate with the Romantic movement contemporary to Hegel – has significant roots in Hegel’s earlier account of art. A striking facet of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*’s account of religion was its treatment of the developing self-consciousness that characterizes the artist proper (*der Künstler*, who emerges explicitly in ancient Greece) as opposed to the mere “artisan” or “artificer” (*der Werkmeister*, or even *der Arbeiter/der Arbeitende*, who had labored in a more unconscious way, Hegel thought, in pre-Greek art on works such as the Egyptian pyramids). Oddly, neither the term *Künstler* nor *Arbeiter* appears in the Heidelberg *Encyclopaedia* treatment of art – perhaps because art is not yet a separate mode of Absolute Spirit itself: although *Enc.* §§462–63 talk about the “birth-pangs” (*Geburtsschmerz*) involved in the “expression and negativity of subjective particularity,” as well as about the inspiration (*Begeisterung*) and “enjoyment of identity” that art involves at this stage, Hegel does not yet go into detail about the specific experience of the individual artist’s pathos and genius as he does in explicit terms in the 1827 and 1830 versions of the *Encyclopaedia*.

## 2 The 1827 and 1830 Versions of the *Encyclopaedia*

### 2.1 *Hegel’s New Account of Art as a Separate Mode of Absolute Spirit*

A decisive shift in both the 1827 and 1830 versions of the *Encyclopaedia* is that art finally has its explicit place as a separate mode within the three modes of Absolute Spirit. And although Hegel does not expand the number of paragraphs devoted to art, he gives in these later versions a new and reconceptualized account of art’s development and importance within Absolute Spirit. However, despite the separation of art and its reconceptualization within the context of a now-triadic account of

Absolute Spirit, it is not the case that Hegel (as Gethmann-Siebert claims) “gives up the close connection between art and religion” in the later versions of the *Encyclopaedia* (Gethmann-Siebert 2005, 233). As mentioned above, Absolute Spirit is still introduced in a way that primarily focuses on the overall relationship between *religion and philosophy* that was characteristic of the earlier version (and in fact adds further considerations that had not appeared in 1817), and the underlying account of art’s specific development, as I will argue in this section, is still significantly predicated on Hegel’s notion of the relation between religion and philosophy. For example, even though he has by this period worked out in his lectures distinct histories of each of the modes of Absolute Spirit, the final versions of the *Encyclopaedia* still correlate these, as I suggest below, with an underlying philosophical account of world history and its place more generally.

## 2.2 Hegel’s New Account of Artistic Activity

Consonant with the opening-up of the treatment of art as a distinctive and separately treated mode of Absolute Spirit in the 1827 and 1830 versions of the *Encyclopaedia* is a new account of the experience of the individual artist. In both later versions, Hegel follows the discussion of the “interpenetrability” of form and content in the beautiful artwork with a consideration of what he now calls “the opposite side” of an artwork: “the fact that it is *something made* by the artist” (*Enc.* 3 §560). This other side of art involves a further dialectical relationship at the level of the artist’s own subjectivity. On the one hand,

the work of art is only then an expression of the God, when there is no sign of subjective particularity in it, and the net power of the indwelling spirit is conceived and born into the world, without admixture and unspotted from its contingency. (*Enc.* 3 §560)

On the other hand,

as liberty only goes as far as there is thought, the action inspired with the fullness of this indwelling power, the artist’s *enthusiasm* [*die Begeisterung des Künstlers*], is like a foreign force under which he is bound and passive; the artistic *production* has on its part the form of natural immediacy, it belongs to the *genius* or particular endowment of the artist [*dem Genie als diesem besonderen Subjekte*] – and is at the same time a labor concerned with technical cleverness and mechanical externalities. The work of art therefore is just as much a work due to free option [*ein Werk der freien Willkür*] and the artist is the master of the God [*der Meister des Gottes*]. (*Enc.* §560)

The contrast that Hegel draws here between the absorption of an artist's subjective particularities in an artwork and the expression of the natural, contingent, and arbitrary side of artistic activity is striking. Unlike Kant, Hegel does not offer an extended account of artistic genius: the Hotho edition of the *Aesthetics* lectures have only a few scattered references, and the lecture notes from particular series do not give much of a sustained treatment either that could help elucidate these quite laconic remarks in the later versions of the *Encyclopaedia*.<sup>12</sup>

Hegel's particular interest in artistic genius here seems to be a crucial part of his expansion of the ideal of artistic activity. Two aspects of this developing notion of the artist should be mentioned. First, Hegel stresses an aspect of the experience of genius by the artist that involves a similar sort of freedom as that experienced by the spectator engaged with the interpenetrability of form and content in the work of art:

In the sublime divinity to which the work of art succeeds in giving expression the artistic genius and the spectator find themselves to be at home, with their personal sense and feeling, satisfied and liberated: to them the vision and the consciousness of free spirit has been vouchsafed and attained. (*Enc.* 3 §562)

Second, however, there is an increase in something that is distinctive for the artist alone (as opposed to the spectator), and that is a kind of self-consciousness or subjective sense of superiority – over the natural material brought into the artistic process, but more broadly, as Hegel says (no doubt with clear awareness of the heretical sound of this claim) *Meisterschaft* over the objective side of religion – the god of the art-religion – as well.

### 2.3 *Finitude, Nature, and the Introduction of the Historical Development of the Forms of Art: Changes between 1827 and 1830*

A further important shift within the later Berlin time period, as mentioned earlier, is that Hegel also makes a significant alteration in the 1830 *Encyclopaedia* to the first sentence (§556) which anchored both 1817 and 1827 versions. Inserted into this sentence about art as the “immediate shape

<sup>12</sup> In the 1823 version of the lectures, for example, there is a historical discussion of the emergence of notions of genius and talent in response to an earlier and more rule-based approach to aesthetics (*LPhA* 9–10), and in other passages genius and *taste* are opposed. Strikingly, the final lecture series in 1828–29 has a number of references to genius in relation to the *symbolic* form of art (Hegel associates genius in this discussion with the distinct religious fervor and fermentation (*Gähren*) he links to symbolic religious art but also to particular “genius” for music).

of absolute spirit” is a new consideration which almost seems to break into the text as a kind of interruption: it concerns the *finitude* of art, and – as a consequence – its *division* or breaking apart into the distinctive moments of the *artwork*, the *artist’s activity*, and the *spectator’s response*.

The entire sentence in the final (1830) version now reads as follows (I have inserted brackets for the new additions to this sentence that Hegel makes between 1827 and 1830):

As this consciousness of the Absolute first takes shape, [its immediacy produces the factor of finitude in Art. On one hand, that is, it breaks up into a work of external common existence, into the subject which produces that work, and the subject which contemplates and worships it. But, on the other hand], it is the concrete contemplation and mental picture of implicitly absolute spirit as the Ideal. In this ideal, or the concrete shape born of the [subjective] spirit, its natural immediacy, which is only a sign of the Idea, is so transfigured by the informing spirit in order to express the Idea, that the figure shows it and it alone – the shape or form of Beauty. (*Enc.* 3 §556)

Why does Hegel now intersperse these three new elements (*ein Zerfallen* (a) *in ein Werk von äusserlichem gemeinen Dasein*, (b) *in das dasselbe produzierende* and (c) *in das anschauende und verehrende Subjekt*) into the first sentence of his 1830 account of art? There are a couple of things to notice. First, these three elements might be taken to represent an attempt at capturing in a more holistic way than many theories of art do the range of considerations that would be relevant for a comprehensive understanding of art. (In this sense we might compare Hegel here, for example, to the way in which M. H. Abrams drew on the four dimensions of art – in the work, audience, artist, and world – as a way of setting up his discussion of four modes of mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective critical theory (see Abrams 1971).)

Second, however, and more specific to Hegel’s editorial project in the final version of the *Encyclopaedia*, this particular revision seems to hang together with several other important additions that Hegel makes to the text. Two of these are most striking in the context of the 1830 revisions: the first (1) concerns Hegel’s insertion of a discussion of *naturalism and its relation to spirit*, and the second (2) concerns the historical sequence of *symbolic, classical, and romantic* forms of art, which Hegel had been working over in the lecture series but which had not previously been given an explicit discussion within the *Encyclopaedia* account of art and Absolute Spirit.

(1) Into the final version of the *Encyclopaedia*, Hegel inserts an entirely new paragraph (*Enc.* 3 §558) concerned with the philosophical questions

of embodiment, nature, and spirit and also provides an intertextual link to a key paragraph from the section on Anthropology earlier in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit:

Art requires *not only an external given material* – (under which are also included subjective images and ideas), but – for the expression of spiritual truth [*Gehalt*] – must use the given *forms of nature* with a significance which art must intuit and inhabit (cf. §411) [*nach deren Bedeutung, welche die Kunst ahnen und innehaben muß*]. Of all such forms *the human is the highest and the true*, because only in it can the spirit have its corporeity and thus its visible expression. This disposes of the principle of the *imitation of nature* in art: a point on which it is impossible to come to an understanding while a distinction is left thus abstract – in other words, so long as the natural is taken in its externality, not as the “characteristic” meaningful nature-form which is significant of spirit. (*Enc.* §558, emphasis added)

The development here is that Hegel thinks it is no longer sufficient to talk about art merely in terms of how its shape or *Gestalt* requires *externality* in some form, but – more to the point – how specific *natural forms* are to be integrated into a work that is recognizably artistic or spiritual. What he has taken from the lecture series on religion and aesthetics during his Berlin years is a way of understanding the historical appropriation of such natural forms in terms of a shift from the representation of largely *animal forms* to the representation of the *human as such* – a shift, as I will show later, that he associates with the move from symbolic (pre-Greek) to classical (Greek) art.<sup>13</sup> From the time of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and onward, Hegel’s aesthetics may be said to turn in many ways on the importance of the human being as a central shape for and topos in artistic appropriation (this is what has been called the notion of *Menschwerdung*).<sup>14</sup> The paragraph to which he refers in the Anthropology section of Subjective Spirit describes the body as “the soul’s work of art” (*das Kunstwerk der Seele*; *Enc.* 3 §411). It discusses various forms of the “identity of interior and exterior” in the soul’s subjection of the body: erect posture, the use of the hand, the mouth’s gestures of laughter and weeping, etc.

<sup>13</sup> This broad move is even more strongly corroborated by contemporary work on recently discovered Paleolithic cave art (of course unknown to Hegel), where the earliest human artwork is overwhelmingly of animal shapes. For more background on Hegel and early art, see Speight 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Hegel says that humanity is the “center and content of true beauty and art” because “the external human form is alone capable of revealing the spiritual in a sensuous way”: artistic beauty in its classical shape thus melds human form (*Gestalt*) and content or meaning (*Gehalt, Bedeutung*): “*das Menschliche . . . [macht] den Mittelpunkt und Inhalt der wahren Schönheit und Kunst aus*”; LFA I:432, MM 14:18; “*Diese Gestalt ist wesentlich die menschliche, weil die Äußerlichkeit des Menschen allein befähigt ist, das Geistige in sinnlicher Weise zu offenbaren*”; LFA I:433, MM 14:20).

Although it has sometimes been criticized in these terms, the move that Hegel is making here is one that need not be thought to require an essentialist account of the difference between the animal and the human. Art's task as a mode of Absolute Spirit is that it is engaged over its history in a sorting-out of various natural animal forms and their supposed symbolic significance and then finding a different sort of question raised by the specific shape whose meaning the human being must "intuit and inhabit" – i.e., by the series of gestures that become characteristic of it – if it is to be human at all. This means that for Hegel the human person, unlike other appropriated forms, is "what is significant for himself and is his own self-explanation."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, in his account of the importance of the human shape among natural forms, Hegel does not depend on some given notion of the difference between human and animal. Rather, the human being is for him that animal which through the process of *Bildung* becomes or claims itself through various acts characterizable as its "second nature." (Compare along these lines Malabou's claim that Hegel's emphasis on second nature means that the human is not the *opposite* of the animal but rather its "inverted lining" (Malabou 2005).) There is also a longer story to tell about the link Hegel seems to be making in this paragraph between second nature and the notion of *imitation* important to the mimetic tradition of art stemming from Aristotle: while Hegel clearly rejected the earlier simplistic notion of the "imitation of nature" as a basis for the consideration of art, he seems to be suggesting in this context that there is a way to understand mimesis properly if one has properly understood the philosophical relation between nature and spirit.<sup>16</sup>

(2) Hegel's other major addition in the 1830 version (*Enc.* 3 §§561–63) is directly related to this first: it is the substantially new and explicit discussion of the three art forms that play such an important role in the aesthetics lectures – the symbolic, the classical, and the romantic. Although Hegel had integrated his account of these three art forms into the lectures in different ways, the narrative arc of their development clearly relates to

<sup>15</sup> The full quotation is as follows: "For the person is what is significant for himself and is his own self-explanation [*Denn das Subjekt ist das Bedeutende für sich selbst und das sich erklärende*]. What he feels, reflects, does, accomplishes, his qualities, his actions, his character, are himself; and the whole range of his spiritual and visible appearance has no other meaning but the person who, in this development and unfolding of himself brings before our contemplation only himself as master over his entire objective world" (*LFA* I:313).

<sup>16</sup> In the *Aesthetics* lectures, the context for this is Hegel's treatment of the differing positions of Winckelmann and von Rumohr with respect to art and nature (Speight 2015, 105–11 and 114 n. 6).

the question of the relation of animal and human forms: the symbolic (pre-Greek) art forms made the heaviest use of natural forms, whereas the classical linked the anthropomorphic and the divine in the statues of the gods and the romantic art form moved to appropriate the inner life of human desires, thoughts, and feelings.

Hegel's insertion of the development of these three art forms emphasizes again the systematic importance in his mind of art's trajectory toward religion: the symbolic is the form of art where art is still in search of an adequate shape for its relevant religious content, where there is not yet the melding of divine and external shape that we have in the classical; and the romantic is the form of art where the classical has been overcome in a new mode of religious and philosophical consideration that does not limit the divine to the sort of specific pantheon of deities characteristic of the Greeks. The appearance of the development over the symbolic, classical, and romantic art forms and their overall role in the transition from art to religion in the systematic context of the *Encyclopaedia* raise a number of important questions about the relation of art and *history*.

Hegel's stress on the development of these three particular forms of art, which forms Part II of the three-part division of aesthetics within the standard edition of the aesthetics lectures, is all the more striking because the other large narrative structure of the aesthetics that involves claims about historical development – namely, the genre theory of individual arts that concludes Hegel's lectures in Part III – is completely missing in the *Encyclopaedia*. Despite their importance to the structure and development of the aesthetics lectures, Hegel's treatment of the specific artistic genres – architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry – is not elaborated in the context of the *Encyclopaedia* account of art, despite the wealth of detail that Hegel offers concerning the philosophical significance of their interrelationships in the Lectures on Aesthetics. Although Hegel develops them in the Aesthetics lectures in a systematic way, he draws on an account that had come to be canonical by the time of Batteux (see Kristeller 1951; 1952). While it is true that the wealth of detail offered in Part III of the lectures could not have been done justice in the brief paragraphs of the *Encyclopaedia*, the exclusion of even the barest bones of the argument of this section seems to emphasize the point that in Hegel's view it is not anything about *genre differences* or their internal development that provides the most important links to his broader account of Absolute Spirit, but perhaps rather something about *art's historical place and purpose* as a mode of reflexive and interpretive engagement with the world. The most relevant historical questions from this systematic perspective are not ones of period



and genre, then, but in some ways the prior question about how there can be a history of art *at all*. (It is interesting to contrast, for example, Schelling's approach to systematicity and the philosophy of art on this score.)

But if the development of art forms across the symbolic, classical, and romantic is the element of history that is essential at the systematic level for Hegel's view of art, there are a number of more vexing contemporary questions for Hegel's history of art that also have been frequently asked about his larger claims regarding the history of religions or about world history more generally. Might such a developmental progression, for example, be simply a matter of historical accident? How can one make the larger teleological claims that Hegel does without also making assumptions about cultural development that today would be regarded as colonialist or racist (or, specifically in the context of early "symbolic" art, primitivist)?

One might approach the historical and developmental question concerning the art forms with a strategy that has also been applied to the interpretation of Hegel's view of world history: namely, looking at the historical in general in terms of the overall intelligibility of the emergence of human freedom, but without the specific assumptions that Hegel makes about particular periods as representing one and only one modality of such freedom, or assumptions that cultures and works not represented or treated sparingly by Hegel are simply to be excluded. If we look at the question from this perspective, how should we think about Hegel's insistence in the final version of the *Encyclopaedia* paragraphs on art that the development of symbolic, classical, and romantic art forms represent modes of persisting importance for our general understanding of *what art is and why it matters*?

Answering that question does require that we think about the difference between what is accidental in a particular temporal order and what Terry Pinkard has called the "deeper intelligibility" from which we can see the logic of its progress (Pinkard 2017b). And it also requires, as Jon Stewart has argued, that we differentiate particular cultural claims from the overall story of human freedom that Hegel wants to tell. What this would mean for the account of the symbolic, classical, and romantic art forms is that we shear off the specific correlation of these as *forms* of art from the cultural moments to which Hegel links them (Persian, Indian, and Egyptian cultures in the case of the symbolic; ancient Greece in the case of the classical; and post-classical civilization in the case of the romantic) and attempt to recover the underlying philosophical questions that determine the moments behind that progression.



From this perspective, I would suggest that the final version of the *Encyclopaedia* connects the two large shifts within the symbolic/classical/romantic development (i.e., those from the symbolic to the classical and from the classical to the romantic) to these two underlying questions about the possibility of art and its role as a mode of Absolute Spirit: (1) How does the self-conscious reflexivity that we associate with the production of art emerge in such a way that artistic agency can find *satisfaction* in its works? (2) What is it about works of art that prompt a mode of *resistance or remainder* such that art becomes a question for itself?

The first of these questions is what Hegel attempts to grasp in the transition from symbolic to classical art: What is it that art from its earliest emergence can be said to be attempting to *do*? Hegel's formulation of that question is, of course, about what art is *in search of*, and the gloss on his formulation is that – both for Hegel and for current researchers working on early art – it appears that the questions about human reflexivity and agency are not ones that are merely retrospective but rather in some form *contemporaneous* with art's emergence itself. *What art is doing* is a question that presents itself in some way *at* the very beginning of art itself.<sup>17</sup>

The second of these questions, which becomes clear in Hegel's notion of the transition from classical to romantic art, involves the consideration of his famous claims about the “end” of art. If in the romantic (and even more so in the post-romantic) era, there can be nothing like classical art's successful embodiment of the beautiful, Hegel argues, “art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past.” This is an important consequence of Hegel's larger view of art as only fulfilling “its supreme task when it has placed itself in the same sphere as religion and philosophy, and when it is simply one way of bringing to our minds an expression of the Divine,” which Hegel glosses as “the deepest interests of mankind, and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit” (*LFA* I:7, 11). Hegel's claims here have spawned many lines of commentary, but with an eye to the questions raised above about Absolute Spirit, I would like to emphasize an opposition between two sides of Hegel's concern: on one side, we might say, is the directionality implied in Danto's famous insistence that, in the modern age, art – particularly abstract art – really *becomes* philosophy in the end (Danto 1997); on another side, however,

<sup>17</sup> For Alva Noë, for example, art is already in some sense a kind of investigative or even philosophical practice, one that emerged ca. 50,000–75,000 years ago as part of a suite of other social-organizing skills that make us recognizably human (clothes-making, new forms of tool-making, and language use similar to our own). See Noë 2015.

are accounts of how within art itself there is something that pushes back at its beholder and perhaps also at attempts to remove it without remainder (Pippin 2014).

On the interpretation I have (all too briefly) sketched, Hegel's notion of the historically developing art forms might better be understood, then, in terms of how art as a mode of Absolute Spirit must both emerge with a distinctive claim within the realm of Absolute Spirit and be part of a larger set of modes concerned with spirit's self-knowledge. It is worthwhile examining these two moments in light of what Hegel says about the significance of art's role as a mode of Absolute Spirit in relation to religion and philosophy.

One important point for interpreting Hegel's difficult claim here can be seen in his extended remark (in both the 1827 and 1830 versions of the *Encyclopaedia*) concerning art's achievements vis-à-vis both religion and philosophy. With respect to religion, Hegel says that it is precisely the *entrance* (*Eintreten*) of art that marks the *fall* (*Untergang*) of religion in its sensual and natural form. In an argument that can be traced back to the initial sections of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* on the connection between art and religion with which we began, Hegel adds: "At the very time art seems to give religion the supreme transfiguration, expression and brilliance [*Verklärung, Ausdruck und Glanz*], it has lifted religion away over its limitation" (*Enc.* 3 §562R). Hegel gives rather Danto-esque praise in this context to art, which he says has therefore "performed the same service as philosophy" in that it has achieved the *purification of spirit from unfreedom* (*die Reinigung des Geistes von der Unfreiheit*) (*Enc.* 3 §562R; translation mine).

Although Hegel qualifies this comment with his insistence that art is "only a grade of liberation, not the supreme liberation itself" (*nur eine Befreiungsstufe, nicht die höchste Befreiung*), he nonetheless returns to a consideration of the *distinctive* importance of art in his final formulation about the relation between art and Absolute Spirit at the beginning of the section on philosophy in which he does not lose the language of art (or religion) as distinctive modes. Hegel insists in this final discussion that philosophy is "the *unity of art and religion*" (*Enc.* 3 §572) – a formulation that emphasizes that, despite its connection with religion, art is not construable *merely* in terms of its dialectical trajectory toward it – and he distinguishes again in this context (as he had above with his remarkable insertion in §566) art's distinctive multidimensionality (its "external" mode of intuition (*äusserliche Anschauungsweise*), "subjective" form of production, and "shivering" of "substantial content into many separate shapes" (*Enc.* 3 §572)).

These final remarks on art's systematic place offer two particularly important suggestions that may be helpful for future interpretive work on Hegel's philosophy of art. The first is Hegel's insistence that philosophy of art requires an exploration of its distinctive *multidimensionality* – a point that might be of particular help in getting beyond the contemporary debate between, say, institutionalist and aestheticist accounts of art. The second is his deliberately naturalistic linking of the historical development of art forms with the project of seeing the emergence of the *human being* as the shape in which art not only first finds its satisfaction but in a more open-ended way remains reflectively concerned with understanding its own activity – a point that might usefully reconnect the famous debate over the “end” of art with ongoing research into its beginning.

## *Art, Logic, and the Human Presence of Spirit in Hegel's Philosophy of Absolute Spirit*

*Robert R. Williams*

In this essay on Hegel's philosophy of absolute spirit, I am going to pursue some of his most important concepts – the concept of recognition, the master/slave relationship, and the true infinite – in one of Hegel's least-read texts, even by Hegel scholars, his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*: vol. 2, *Determinate Religion*. Here he employs these concepts heuristically, freely, and creatively in his studies of Asian, Jewish, Greek, and Roman religions. I confine my attention in Section I of this essay to Hegel's discussion of Greek *Kunstreligion* (the religion of Art and Beauty), and in Section II to the Jewish Religion of the Sublime. Hegel identifies these as religions of freedom, of the elevation of spirit over nature. Each asserts a different version of the important theme that runs throughout the history and philosophy of religion, namely, that spirit has a human presence, or, the humanity of God:

The determination that *spirit* is present in humanity, and that human self-consciousness is essentially the presence of spirit – this is a conjunction [that spirit has a human presence] we shall trace through various religions; it necessarily to the first and oldest determinate religions, and we shall see that it is also present in the Christian religion, but in a more exalted fashion and transfigured. (*LPR* 2:293)

Hegel concludes his analyses of the Greek and the Jewish religions with the following assertion: “The Jewish view that God is essentially for thought alone, and the sensuousness of the Hellenic beauty of shape, are *equally* contained in the process of the divine life and, being sublated, they are freed from their limitedness” (*LPR* 2:660 n.). Accordingly, we shall first examine what, in Hegel's view, the strengths and the limitations of each religion are and what their sublation involves.

Hegel claims that Christianity presupposes and continues in transfiguration the common yet divergent themes of the human presence and shape of Spirit in both Greek and Jewish religions. This transformation offers a

third interpretation of the human presence of spirit, as well as showing how, in Hegel's interpretation, Christianity is indebted to its predecessors and preserves their truth.

The Greek religion of beauty asserts that the divine has a sensible presence and that this presence cannot be a power of nature or an animal, but rather must be a beautiful *human* shape because only the human shape can make manifest divine subjectivity. To be sure, this requires artistic portrayal in an ideal, rather than empirical, human shape. In contrast, the Jewish religion is a religion of sublimity. The sublime negates the phenomenon through which it appears. Judaism holds that God is essentially for thought *alone*; the sublime creator *must not* have any direct sensible presence. These claims cancel each other out. However, Hegel's thesis is that they are sublated in a higher unity-in-difference: the theological claims of each religion express equally essential yet contrasting aspects of divine life. But in their initial appearance in *Determinate Religion*, these shapes are one-sided and opposed. The Greek gods are ideal but finite personifications; Greek religion is a religion of humanity. The sublime creator of Jewish theology is not substance but subject, that subsists for thought alone, but by negating the finite through which it appears, resembles a one-sided or spurious infinite.

However, freed from their limitations and one-sidedness, these religions, taken together, are stages in the development wherein spirit comes to be for spirit. The basic ideas inherent in the Hellenic sensuousness of shape, and in the Religion of the Sublime, are sublated and transformed in a higher determinate unity that is neither traditional theism that separates the infinite from the finite, nor a Feuerbach-style collapse of the infinite into the finite, but a third alternative: Hegel's concept of the true infinite, a unity in and through difference of finite and infinite. This will be discussed in Section III.

## I The Greek Religion of Beauty

According to Hegel, organic life is a higher principle than the "mere nature" of the sun, moon, rivers, etc. (*LPR* 2:288). Moreover, animals are organisms. Organisms exhibit a vital, self-developing, self-regulating independence. *Organic life is the form or mode of existence that is most closely related to the spiritual*, because in it, free self-determining independence makes its appearance.

Important as organic natural life is, there are important differences between the animal shape and the human shape (*LPR* 2:367). For the

Greeks, subjectivity “cannot have a merely natural content” (ibid., 462). The principle of Greek religion is “the subjective freedom of the spiritual: the natural is no longer worthy to constitute by itself the inner quality or content of any such God” (ibid.). What counts is no longer “merely” life, but also “free determination according to purpose.” Free determination according to purpose implies that the divine is something more than natural objects like the sun, and something more than animal (e.g., a lion or a cow); namely, the divine is not substance but subject.

When the divine is taken to be subject, i.e., personal, art becomes necessary to express it. The classical ideal of art is the harmonious interpenetration of spiritual meaning and sensible shape, at once universal and particular, the concrete universal (*LPhA*, 311). However, classical art exhibits the concrete universal in the form of fantasy, not yet in the logical form of the concept. Nevertheless, art is necessary for religion and its cultus, because the only shape in which the sensible expresses the divine is the human shape:

for there is no other bodily shape that would be an embodiment of the spiritual; but it is not the figure of an empirical human being, but rather an ideal, essentially beautiful shape. This essentially beautiful shape is the essential expression of the spiritual character, the determinate representation of the spiritual that an artist has and expresses. (*LPR* 2:477)

For example, the Olympian gods are portrayed in ideal human shape: “Herodotus states categorically that Homer and Hesiod made the Greeks’ gods for them. And it has always been the artists who have been responsible for shaping the gods. Their shape is one that is posited subjectively, by finite spirit” (*LPR* 2:475). “This . . . beautiful configuration or shaping is, as it were, the *organon* for understanding the world” (*LPR* 2:477).

Hegel explains that the need to make God as subject visible through art arises only when natural immediacy has been superseded and surpassed by the consciousness of freedom, and when God is regarded as free and self-determining. *Art is necessary to portray God only when the sphere of nature and raw, merely natural life (Naturzustand), is left behind.* The cultus emerges only when God is subject, free, and personal. Hegel writes:

The distinctively novel relationship . . . is the standpoint of art, i.e., fine art. This is the precise point where art must emerge in religion and where it has a necessary role. Art, it is true, can be mimetic, but not just mimetic. It can remain at that level but then it is not *fine* art [*schöne Kunst*], not truly divine, not what is truly needed for religion; where it is that, where it emerges as it essentially is, it pertains to the very concept of God . . . *Genuine art is*

*religious art.* This is not needed when the deity has a natural shape, e.g., that of the sun, light, or a river; it is still not needed where the reality of God has . . . the shape of a living animal, nor . . . when the mode of manifestation is light . . . *The human shape, precisely in its aspect as the actual appearing of subjectivity, truly needs to be pictured for the first time only when God is defined as genuinely subject. The need to make the subject visible through art can arise only when the moment of natural immediacy is overcome . . . by the moment of freedom – or when the essence of God begins to be essentially free and self-determining.* (LPR 2:373–74; emphasis added)

Moreover, the overcoming of the titanic forces of nature and their subjection to spirit is a main theme of Greek religion and art. Greek religion and theology are defined largely by the battle between the old nature gods (Titans) and the new political gods (Olympians); the subjection of the former to the latter is a central topic in Greek religion (LPR 2:645). Subjectivity cannot have a merely natural content, and the merely natural is no longer worthy to constitute by itself the inner quality of any Greek god that embodies the subjective freedom of the spiritual. Further, spiritual subjectivity exists as a self-determining agency that pervades, dominates, and directs the natural (LPR 2:463–64).

#### A *The Cultus in the Form of Art*

Hegel characterizes the cultus as “the relationship through which the externality of the represented deity, its objectivity over against subjective consciousness, is sublated. Through the cultus the identity of the two is brought about, and self-consciousness becomes conscious of the indwelling of the divine” (LPR 2:478). This implies that the gods are spiritual subjects, free, and personal. The first aspect of the cultus is that “the gods are recognized and honored; they are the substantive powers, the essential fulcrum of the natural and spiritual universe” (ibid.). Hegel elaborates:

in truth we *recognize* these universal powers. For example, we honor duties, justice, scientific knowledge, civic and political life, family relationships; these essentialities are what is true, *they are the bonds that hold the world together*: . . . they are the substantive [frame] in which all else subsists. (LPR 2:479)

These beautiful shapes are not merely subjective representations; they are a “content [that] has accordingly to be *recognized*” (ibid.; emphasis added).

For example, these divine powers are people’s own customs, their ethical life, the rights they have and exercise, their own spirit, their own

substantiality, not an external [heteronomous] essentiality and substantiality. Thus Athena is the city and also the goddess. The deity is the spirit of the people, not their guardian spirit . . . but their living, actual, present spirit represented in its essentiality and universality . . . *In this recognition and worship of the essentially substantial, the worshippers are therefore free and immediately at home.* They have their real life in it, and they know it as their own real life. (*LPR* 2:479; emphasis added)

Since the substantial ethical powers pervade both the human and the divine side of the cultus, the cultus is a religion of humanity (*LPR* 2:460) in the sense that “The substantial objective element revered as god is equally the proper essentiality of the human being” (*LPR* 2:662). For Hegel, in Greek religion

human beings are present to themselves in their gods . . . [T]heir gods have the very same content as . . . the content of concrete human beings. This humanity of the gods is what appears in one respect to be what is inadequate in this religion; but at the same time it is what is attractive in it, because there is nothing unintelligible, nothing incomprehensible; there is in god no content that is not familiar to human beings, nothing they do not know, do not find, do not know within themselves. (*LPR* 2:460)

So understood, the gods “cease to be something otherworldly and have determinate content” (*LPR* 2:459). The Greek deities are not abstractly transcendent. The divine–human identity means that the recognition of these substantive ethical powers is serenely free: “in recognizing their essential substance, they are free, so the recognition is . . . a veneration of powers that are dear to them because they dwell within them” (*LPR* 2:480).

Thus the “cultus . . . consists in recognizing these essentialities of the spiritual and natural world and making them accessible to representation in eulogies, festivals, triumphs, plays, dramas, songs and so forth – which is how *art* comes in. In artistic portrayal, these deities are properly worshipped – especially in games and festivals named after them” (*LPR* 2:484). In such ‘worship’ the artistic representation and recognition of the gods appears in the community itself. In its religious festivals, Greek humanity displays its best side, e.g., the Olympic Games (*LPR* 2:485).

### *B Implications for Philosophy of Religion*

The emergence of art as the form of the cultus raises issues for philosophy of religion (*LPR* 2:275). When God is artistically represented, such representation assumes that God can be sensibly intuited. But this does not



agree with or correspond with the theological point that God is thought, and only for thought. As we will see, this is the claim made by Jewish theology on behalf of the sublime personal One, the creator, which, Hegel claims, “first merits the name of God” (*LPR* 2:669). In contrast, the Greek religion of art and beauty is not abstract metaphysical thought, but rather an artistic shaping of the divine (as explained above) by fantasy for fantasy (*LPR* 2:658).

Second, as a work of art, divinity is produced by human hands. Hegel remarks that this does not fit our idea of God. For if God is spiritual subjectivity, this means that spirit is self-determining. Such self-determination implies that the mode of existence here is posited by spirit, not by virtue of any contingent natural aspect, but rather it is *a mode of existence that corresponds to thought, that is, purposive, practical activity*. While this is consistent with art and artistic creativity (*LPR* 2:375), if the mode in which the subject posits itself is *literally sensory*, this is defective (*LPR* 2:376).

The work of art is produced by human hands. This producing and shaping is poetizing. But poetizing is not sheer inventing or lying (*LPR* 2:472; cf. 2:658). The *form* of the gods’ appearance, not their rational content, is determined by the poet. However, the divine is not yet grasped by conceptual thought, or in abstract categories.

Third, the Greek gods are finite, not only in their modes of appearance and *being-for-other* as beautiful art, but also in their subjection to a superior power: fate.

Above this circle of the gods there remains the One, hovering over their particularization; *it is this One that makes them limited*. What hovers over them is simple necessity, the fate that is necessity devoid of concept because it lacks all determinacy – ineluctable, unapproachable necessity. Even as in their God human beings possess themselves, so too *this same necessity lies above both alike*. (*LPR* 2:460; emphasis added)

In the 1827 lectures Hegel described necessity as follows: “Destiny is devoid of purpose and wisdom, it is a blind necessity that stands above all, even the gods, uncomprehended and desolate. The abstract cannot be comprehended” (*LPR* 2:651). Further, the incomprehensibility of abstract necessity means that it is without purpose, without concept, “because it does not contain its own determining within itself; there is only a separation into mutually external particulars” (*LPR* 2:469). Necessity is a unity that does not unify the gods and humans that are subjugated to it, because it is sheer externality, i.e., without any inherent criterion of wisdom or

determining or content. Necessity is given over to chance. Necessity does not enter into, much less constitute, a totality with the gods. Since necessity remains external to them, they remain a purely contingent aggregate. The twelve principal gods of Olympus are differentiated into particular shapes, but there is no logical-conceptual order here, "and it is a waste of effort to try to systematize them" (*LPR* 2:470).

Greek tragedy asserts that blind necessity overrides everything, gods and human beings alike. "On the one side there is a crushing iron power, on the other a blind obedience without freedom" (*LPR* 2:652). Yet this understates the ability of the heart to renounce itself and "make itself the grave of the heart" (*LProofs*, 108–9; ch. 12). Hegel offers an appreciative account of fate piety that can only be hinted at here.<sup>1</sup> The tragic hero renounces everything, and in so doing she or he transforms into freedom the force exercised upon him by fate. While abstract fate cannot be comprehended, its soul-crushing force can be transformed by freedom in the acceptance of fate. This is the pure abstract freedom that leaves nothing for fate's power to lay hold of. "In that abstract freedom there is . . . no solace for human beings. One needs solace only insofar as one demands a compensation for a loss; but here no compensation is needed for one has given up the inner root of what one lost" (*LPR* 2:652).<sup>2</sup>

Let us summarize Hegel's assessment of Greek religion and theology. (1) The recognition that the beautiful gods are subject to the superior power of fate and necessity implies their finitude. (2) Greek religion is a religion of humanity in the sense that the substantial element(s) venerated is also essential to and immanent in humans. On the plus side: this means that recognizing the gods as the substantial powers of ethical life constitutes freedom, because there is nothing alien or incomprehensible in the gods. While this is attractive, Hegel observes that the main defect here is "not that there is too much of the anthropopathic in the Greek gods, not at all, for there is still too little humanity in them . . . There is still too little that is human in God" (*LPR* 2:660). This criticism is clarified in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*. The beautiful shapes of the Greek gods mask an underlying human inequality that 'justifies' slavery. This inequality and imposed servitude imply that there is too little humanity in Greek culture – i.e., insufficient recognition that the human being as such is free. Consequently,

<sup>1</sup> See *LProofs*, ch. 12, for the most complete account. Here I will cite and follow the account in Hegel's 1827 *LPR*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Enc.* 1 §147Z for a parallel account of solace and consolation in a fate piety that does without, if not renounces, any hope of reconciliation.

in spite of the fact that the Greek gods have ideal human shapes, there is too little that is authentically human in Greek theology.

## II The Jewish Religion of the Sublime

Hegel regards both the Greek religion of beauty and the Jewish religion of the sublime as spiritual religions of freedom. Nature is not an immediate independent content, but the appearance of something, namely, ethical-rational inwardness. In Greek religion, the ethical distinguishes itself into particular ethical powers (state, family, etc.). However, these ethical powers are only an external aggregate without unity or authentic subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> Here contingency and chaos rule. Hence these ethical powers can and do come into collision and tragic conflict. In contrast, the sublime One gathers and unifies the particular ethical powers:

Spirituality fulfilled within itself in such a way that . . . these ethical powers are brought together in a single purpose by means of which the One, the spirit, is defined as having being within itself, as wise. Here, therefore, we have spirit in its freedom, at once inwardly concrete and inwardly determinate, which is to say that it exists as the Wise One. *This spirit first merits for us the name of God*, while the previous one did not. *It is no longer substance, but subject.* (LPR 3:267; emphasis added; cf. LPR 2:669)

This unity – pure subjectivity – exists only for pure thought. Thinking subsists only for thinking; thought starts from itself. As self-initiating absolute subject, God is the initiator of creation. Here the One subsists not as substance, but as the personal One, as subject.

In his earliest account, Hegel finds in Jewish theology a negative theology of God as sheer sublime power, and a corresponding view of human freedom as unfreedom – the unhappy consciousness. These views are found in his *Early Theological Writings* and in his 1821 *Lecture Manuscript on the Philosophy of Religion*. Hegel modifies his early views in his 1824 and 1827 lectures, where he regards human dependence on God not as the opposite of freedom, but rather as liberation from false dependencies, i.e., from idolatries and false gods (see Hodgson 1987). Further, in 1824 and 1827 Hegel expounds the concept of divine purpose as realizing

<sup>3</sup> See Hegel's important survey of *Determinate Religion* in LPR 3:262–71. This survey is almost unintelligible without prior acquaintance with the relevant sections of *Determinate Religion*. However, it is clear and helpful, identifying and summarizing the major themes of the earlier volume and their further development in vol. 3.

itself in human consciousness and as reflected back to God in reciprocal recognition (see *LPR* 2:434, 678–79).

In the *Early Theological Writings*, Hegel regards Jewish religion as a religion of alienation (*ETW* 226), i.e., as the unhappy consciousness. The divine–human relation is little more than a master–slave relation. God the master commands, and the human being simply obeys and submits. This view of their relationship constitutes a legal-penal vision of the world. Law is conceived as the abstract universal, and human beings as individuals are sacrificed to the universal. God is a moral judge, and the Kingdom of God is a union through domination, through the power of a stranger over a stranger (*ETW* 278).

The early interpretive framework is elaborated further in the 1821 lectures with an important difference. Hegel regards Jewish religion as a religion of sublimity. As sublime creator, God is the personal One, but understood abstractly as sheer power that is manifest in creation and preservation.

However, the created world is not God's purpose (*LPR* 2:135). The sublime is simply God's power. Further, all God's activity is solely power (*LPR* 2: 137). This a self-contained abstraction (*LPR* 2:138). This is evident in Hegel's reading of Job: God is sheer abstract power, demanding submission (*LPR* 2:141).

In the 1821 lectures, Hegel's account of Judaism corresponds to the negative dialectics of the Logic of Essence, which he describes in the *Logic* as the posited contradiction (*Enc.* I §114R). God as essence has only a negative relation to reality, and a positive relation only to the abstract being of power, but not yet to power's positive concrete being, namely, God's wisdom and purpose (*LPR* 2:141).

Hegel's 1821 analysis of the cultus presupposes the logic of essence, the posited contradiction. This means that *no community or relation between God and human beings is possible* (*LPR* 2:153). Consequently, God's power, though sublime, is alienating; the human being exists vis-à-vis God in absolute contradiction; pure freedom is absolute unfreedom, the self-consciousness of the servant over against the Master (Lord) (*LPR* 2:153). God as master is abstract transcendence.

Further, when God is conceived as Master, the God-relation consists of submission and onerous service. This is not rational or free service, because the human being is denied any free self-realization. Relation to God is simply heteronomous subjugation (*LPR* 2:156).

However, in the 1824 lectures, the logical lens through which Hegel views Jewish religion shifts from the negative dialectic of the Logic of

Essence toward the affirmative dialectic of the Logic of the Concept. The concept is a *resolved* opposition or *totality*. This shift from opposition and contradiction to reconciliation and totality leads to a revision of the earlier view of religion as alienation. Judaism is more than a religion of divine master and human slave. Hegel now finds in it affirmative views of God as purposive subjectivity and of human freedom grounded in God.

Hegel modifies his earlier interpretation: God is not simply sublime power and initiating creator, God is also purposive. What could God's purpose be? His purpose can be nothing else than God Godself. However, this does not mean that God is a wholly self-enclosed, self-contained unity and power. While God can have no purpose other than Godself, "This purpose must not maintain the form of being contained, it must not keep to itself; instead it must attain a distinct reality" (LPR 2:422). According to Hegel, divine wisdom means that God's purpose is supposed to become determinate, i.e., *realized in an other*, namely, human consciousness. This realization is the *being-for-other* of the divine purpose (LPR 2:422).

Thus, in 1824, Hegel finds that Jewish theology also asserts that spirit has a human presence and shape, but he states this not in the language of artistic imagination, but rather in the language of divine purpose and its recognition:

The question now is, if *wisdom* is to become operative, if the *purpose* is to be realized, what is the soil as such in which this can occur? This soil cannot be anything save spirit itself, or more precisely humanity. *Humanity is the object of purpose, of the power that defines itself and acts accordingly, the power that is wisdom. Human being – or finite consciousness in general – is spirit in the determinate category of finitude. To realize the purpose is to posit the concept in a manner distinct from its mode of being as absolute concept subsisting in and for itself; it is to posit it in the mode of finitude generally . . . Essentially spirit only is for spirit; . . . hence the other in which it realizes itself is finite spirit . . . So the soil in which it realizes itself . . . is itself something spiritual; it must be a soil in which spirit at the same time exists for itself. Humanity, the human world, is thus posited as essential purpose, as the soil of the divine wisdom and the divine power.* (LPR 2:422–23; emphasis added)

The result of the realization of divine purpose is an affirmative relationship of humanity to God, in which humanity is at home with itself in its other and therefore free:

What follows . . . [is] that human beings obtain in this an affirmative relationship to their God . . . Thus humanity, as one side of reality, . . . exists affirmatively vis-à-vis God, it is consciousness of the absolute essence as its own essence; in other words, *the freedom of consciousness is hereby*

*posited as such within God – in him humanity is at home with itself.* This moment of self-consciousness is an essential moment of freedom . . . even though it is not yet the whole content of the relationship. By virtue of it *human beings exist for themselves as ends in themselves; in God their consciousness is free, it is justified in God, it exists freely on its own account, essentially for itself;* and inasmuch as it directs itself toward God, human consciousness produces itself. This is the general picture. (LPR 2:423; emphasis added)

The realization of God's purpose includes the recognition of God by others. God's being-for-self is manifest in God's being-for-other, namely, human being, and more generally, the human world.

The soil in which this purpose is to be found cannot be anything else but spirit as such. And since in spirit as consciousness God is purpose in the spirit set over against him (i.e., here in the finite spirit as such), therefore . . . *his being recognized in finite spirit is his purpose . . .* This finite spirit is essentially consciousness; God must therefore be the object of consciousness as his own essence. In consciousness he *is* his own purpose – the purpose being that he should be recognized and venerated [as God]. (LPR 2:434)

Hegel's elaboration of the intersubjective structure of God's communication of his purpose to human beings reflects his concept of recognition. Namely, God's purpose is "that his concept should become objective for him [in human consciousness] and then return within him, that he should possess himself in what is realized" (LPR 2:434). The process of divine-human mutual recognition constitutes religion. Thus the presence of spirit has an interhuman shape constitutive of community.

If God is purposive in the above sense, then God cannot simply be sheer power. For as we have seen, sheer power plunges the human being into alienation and contradiction such that pure freedom is absolute unfreedom. But in purposive, cognitive communication, God's purpose becomes objective to God and returns to God in and through human recognition and veneration. Hegel's interpretation of Jewish religion is no longer based on the Logic of Essence, but rather on the logic of Recognition based on the Concept. According to the Concept,

neither the abstract infinite separate from the finite, nor the abstract finite separate from the infinite, has any truth . . . [On the contrary,] to see that in the one there lies the determination of the other, the simple insight into their inseparability, means to comprehend them; *this inseparability is their concept . . .* This *unity* of the finite and infinite and the *distinction* between them are . . . inseparable. (WL, SLM 153–54, translation modified)

Since the "soil" in which God's purpose is realized is human consciousness, God's relation to human being cannot be that of master to slave, but rather an affirmative relation of freedom as being at home with self in and through one's other.

According to Hegel's 1824 analysis of the cultus (*LPR* 2:441–47), God is no longer sheer power, but is now understood as purposive action, i.e., as *wisdom and power combined*. Thus God is inwardly concrete, and this inner concreteness means that God is not some abstract master demanding blind submission. Hegel reflects on the assertion that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is fear of absolute power that nullifies or is capable of nullifying all one's power and strength. However, this absolute negativity is not abstract negation, but rather itself purposive activity that elevates the human being to the level of pure thought (*LPR* 2:443). The fear of the Lord is the *beginning of wisdom*. This fear is not the bad kind that fears or flees from something, but rather the good fear that *starts* something and is the liberation from everything merely finite and particular (idolatry) in the intuiting of absolute power. This good fear is not a fearful dependence, but a liberation in which God posits individuals as ends (*LPR* 2:443–44). Thus the fear of the Lord turns into absolute trust in God as absolute purpose and wise power.

Trust means that I identify with this concrete, wise, purposive One. This identity is not an abstract One in which I would lose my own identity, but an identity in and through difference: "I am the substantive unity, but this One with whom I am identical is the other, who is my Lord" (*LPR* 2:445). Hegel refers to *Job* in all three lecture series. In 1821, Job submits to sheer divine power – a servile consciousness. It is his servile submission to God's power that justifies him. However, in the 1824 lectures, the fear of the Lord includes an intuition of absolute power which "turns in a flash into absolute trust" (*LPR* 2:447) in a union with God. Trust is qualitatively different from fearful blind *submission*. Trust grasps the relation to God as an "indissoluble bond" (*LPR* 2:451). This spiritual unity first merits the name of God (*LPR* 2:669; from the 1827 lectures).

In the 1827 lectures, Hegel addresses the sharp contrast of Greek theogony with the Jewish God as the sublime creator. The Greek gods emerge and result from a struggle. But as sublime creator, God is the absolute first, the initiating factor (*LPR* 2:673). The key to the meaning of divine subjectivity is its self-initiating sublimity. Hegel claims that God manifests Godself in nature, but in a sublime manner. God does not manifest Godself immediately, but as the power over creation. The self-manifesting divine essence does not have being-for-other externally or in



any natural way because God is “only for thought,” for spirit. This “only for thought” is the first way of defining the One; it “provides the ground for grasping God as spirit (and as sublime) and is the root from which God’s spirituality as such derives, the root of his concrete genuine content” (LPR 2:426).

The identification of God’s sublimity with the absolute power of creation suffices for conceiving God as the initiator of creation; however, the particular form of creation, the moment of particularization, falls outside of God. What goes forth as creation is stamped with the character of being a prosaic, merely finite, transitory creature, which is not truly independent (LPR 2:426–27). Further, as initiating creator, God does not achieve any return to self through the process of particularization (LPR 2:427). As sublime, God is related, but not *reciprocally* related, to the world. God’s appearing is grasped immediately as a sublimity superior to ordinary appearances (LPR 2:677). The natural world is both posited and limited, such that God is superior to this manifestation. God distinguishes Godself from the manifestation *within* the manifestation itself. *The sublime is both the relation of God to, and the differentiation of God from, the world of appearance within the appearance itself.* How can this be understood?

Hegel clarifies the issue by comparing sublimity with the Religion of Beauty. The Greek gods are one-sided personifications of ethical powers that hold the world together.

But, in the religion of the sublime, such personification is impossible. God is and remains the absolute initiating subject. Nature manifests God, but in such a way that God subsists outside of and independent of the material in which God is manifest. Within God’s manifestation (being-for-other), God distinguishes Godself (being-for-self) from the manifestation. Hegel claims that, as sublime, “God at once distinguishes himself from the manifestation even within it, and does *not* get his *being-for-self*, his essential presence [*Dasein*] from this externality, as in the religion of beauty” (LPR 2:678). God already possesses an actual *Fürsichsein* (*being-for-self*) *independent* of the manifestation *within* the manifestation. “Nature . . . manifests only God, but in such a way that God subsists at the same time *outside* this manifestation” (LPR 2:678; emphasis added). This implies that the sublime is self-initiating subject, abstract power, and transcendence (LPR 2:433–44).

In the 1824 and 1827 lectures, Hegel points a way to overcome the abstract sublime as sheer power when he develops further dimensions and qualifications of divine power, namely, purpose and wisdom. Hegel’s



account of the realization of divine purpose includes mutual recognition and ethical life. He formulates the issues in the following way:

Initially sublimity is only the representation of power, not yet of a purpose. The purpose, not merely of the One, but of God in general, can be nothing else than God himself: *that his concept should become objective for him and then return within him, that he should possess himself in what is realized.* This would be the universal purpose as such . . . *But if we speak of purpose, then it cannot be mere power;* it must somehow be determined as well. The soil in which this purpose is to be found cannot be anything else but spirit as such. And since in spirit as consciousness God is purpose in the spirit set over against him (i.e., here in the finite spirit as such), therefore his being represented, *his being recognized in finite spirit is his purpose* . . . This finite spirit is essentially consciousness; God must therefore be the object of consciousness as [its own] essence. *In [human] consciousness he is his own – the purpose being that he should be recognized and venerated [as God].* The glory of God is his prime purpose, and this purpose is just what is achieved in the world. (LPR 2:434; translation modified; emphasis added)

God's purpose can only be Godself. But while God is independent *Fürsichsein*, this is not otherworldly transcendence because God's independence and purpose are manifest not in nature but in human consciousness, recognition, and veneration.

In 1827, Hegel elaborates:

*The true purpose and its realization do not fall within nature as such, but essentially within consciousness instead.* [Purpose] appears reflectedly in self-consciousness in such a way that *its purpose is to become known by consciousness, and for consciousness the purpose is to acknowledge it* [the purpose that appears in reflection]. (LPR 2:678–79; emphasis added)

For human beings, their purpose within God's purpose is to acknowledge, recognize, and venerate God as God. Accordingly, human beings are summoned to recognize, venerate, and praise God: "the whole world should proclaim the glory of God . . . Not merely the Jewish people but the whole earth, all peoples . . . should praise the Lord" (LPR 2:679). God's purpose of becoming recognized becomes objective in human consciousness, and returns from humans to God in cognition, recognition, and veneration.

If God is purposive power summoning recognition and veneration, then the divine cannot be an impersonal One or a power of nature or an abstract substance. The theology of creation which limits God to initiatory creative power is contradicted by the structure and process of mutual recognition wherein God's purpose becomes objective to God in human

consciousness, and returns to God through human recognition and veneration. Such reciprocity implies that God is not merely substance, but subject, personal, and that God is dependent by choice on human recognition and veneration for the accomplishment of his purpose.

However, although God's purpose is universal, Hegel charges that in classical Jewish theology this universalism is understood as limited, restricted, and parochial: "a limitation is present in this religion, insofar as it is consciousness of God, a limitation understood . . . in terms of the fact that the Jewish God is only a national God, has restricted himself to this nation" (*LPR* 2:683–84). This reduction of God the creator to an exclusive national God "stems from the nature of the servile consciousness" (*LPR* 2:684 n.).

However, this interpretation of Judaism is contradicted by Hegel's 1824 interpretation of the Judaism as a spiritual religion of divine sublimity, in terms of which the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and the beginning of *liberation* from all servile dependence, because the divine power is purposive and that human liberation is included in God's purpose. Hegel's recognitive analysis of the divine–human relationship supersedes any master/slave opposition. Here Hegel reads Jewish theology as anticipating the suspension, if not actually suspending, any deification of the nation that places it beyond criticism.

Hegel does not resolve the contradiction between his 1821 and 1824/27 interpretations of Jewish theology. Although, in 1824, he interpreted divine purposiveness as implying divine–human mutual recognition, his remarks from 1827 continue to assert that God is initiator of creation only. This implies a one-sided, asymmetrical relation that Hegel criticizes elsewhere: a one-sided relation is "no relation at all" (*LProofs* 66). Such one-sidedness undermines the possibility of mutual recognition and community.

In Hegel's view, both the Greek religion of beauty and the Jewish religion of the sublime are one-sided, halfway houses of spirit. The contradictions and limitations in each must be sublated in a higher, more comprehensive point of view that preserves the truth of each, because both religions assert equally important aspects of God's life (*LPR* 2:660 n.).

### III The True Infinite: Hegel's Philosophical and Theological Trinitarianism

Hegel distinguishes the "true infinite" from the "spurious infinite." He claims that every attempt to *separate* the infinite from the finite makes the

infinite itself finite, and treats the finite as if it were independent of, or foundational for, the infinite. The result is dualism, i.e., the spurious infinity, a finite-infinite that, in transcending the finite, reinstates and posits the finite as an absolute limit. Hegel writes:

One must be clear about these logical definitions of “finite” and “infinite.” When we keep them apart, we are in the realm of finite thinking. When we say “infinite spirit” the word “infinite” is itself understood in a one-sided way because it has the finite over against it. In order not to be one-sided, spirit must encompass finitude within itself, and finitude in general means . . . a process of self-distinguishing . . . If God has the finite only over against himself, then he himself is finite and limited. *Finitude must be posited in God himself, not as something insurmountable, absolute, independent, but . . . as this process of distinguishing . . . that . . . is also eternally self-sublating.* (LPR 3:263–64; emphasis added)<sup>4</sup>

For Hegel the finite does not have its being in *itself* but in an *other*, i.e., the infinite. The finite sublates itself in the infinite that is its essence and truth (LPR 2:256–58). Although Hegel does not use the term, his position is neither theism nor atheism but panentheism.

Hegel affirms the true infinite, calling it the “fundamental concept of philosophy” (WL, SLM 129–37; cf. Enc. 1 §95R). The true infinite is not opposed to the finite, but rather incorporates the finite within itself; i.e., it is a unity in and through difference. This unity in difference requires speculative thinking

which consists solely in grasping the opposed moments in their unity. Each moment actually shows that it contains its opposite within itself and that in this opposite it is united with itself; thus the affirmative truth is this immanently active unity [in and through difference]. (WL, SLM 152)

For Hegel, neither the infinite nor the finite, taken abstractly by itself, has any truth. To see that in the one lies the determination of the other is insight into their inseparability, and this inseparability is just what the true infinite is, its concept (WL, SLM 153). The true infinite negates the absolute difference of finite and infinite (constitutive of the spurious infinite), and is their affirmative community in difference. This inseparability means that the true infinite *validates* the finite within itself as ideal (LPR 2:258). This inseparability and validation of the finite by infinite is what constitutes the true infinite as the basic concept of philosophy (Enc. 1 §95R) and is the speculative nucleus of Hegelianism (see Rinaldi 1992). In

<sup>4</sup> For a more complete treatment, cf. Williams 2012, ch. 6; 2010–11a; 2010–11b.

the *Philosophy of Religion*, this speculative nucleus is elaborated as a speculative theology of the triune absolute spirit, God as spirit in God's community (see *LPR* 1: 288–324; *Enc.* 3 §554).<sup>5</sup>

Recall Hegel's proposal concerning the sublation of Greek and Jewish theologies:

The Jewish view that God is essentially for thought alone, and the sensuousness of the Hellenic beauty of shape, *are equally contained in this process of the divine life and, being sublated, they are freed from their limitedness.* (*LPR* 2:660 n.; emphasis added)

It is clear that Hegel intends to mediate the sublime personal One of Judaism with the Hellenic beauty of shape. Both are equally contained in sublation in the divine life which is understood as a totality that excludes the separation of the infinite from the finite (classical theism) and that affirms that the finite is included in the infinite and validated as its manifestation, i.e., panentheism.

From each religion, Hegel extracts its central but one-sided insight into divine life. Each must be stripped of its one-sidedness and enter into union with its opposite. In sublation each term is both itself and its other. With the Greek religion of beauty Hegel affirms that if spirit is to be manifested in sensuous form, spirit can make itself manifested only in human shape (*ibid.*). Hegel adds:

This does not mean that spirit is something sensible or material, but rather the mode of its immediacy and reality, its being-for-other, is its being intuited in human shape. That is why the Greeks represented the gods as human beings. It must not be said that human beings do this because it is *their own* shape, as if that were all it amounted to; but in fact they are right to do it because *this is the only shape in which spirit exists.* (*LPR* 2:661; emphasis added)<sup>6</sup>

Hegel also criticizes Greek culture and its gods, pointing out that “There is still too little that is human in God . . . The main defect is not that there is too much of the anthropopathic in these Gods, but that there is too little” (*LPR* 2:660 n.). Also, as personifications, the Greek gods are subject to the higher power of fate.

Hegel believes that the theology of the sublime agrees with the Greek principle of the humanity of God, but it has a different theology: the

<sup>5</sup> The true infinite is one of the few logical categories explicit in the *LPR*.

<sup>6</sup> Hegel refers to Xenophanes' well-known remark that if lions had gods, they would picture them as lions. But Hegel observes that “it is just this point that lions never get to” (*ibid.*).

Jewish God is self-initiating, self-determining subject, the sublime creator. As such, God is both concrete and inwardly determinate: "*This spirit first merits for us the name of God*, while the previous one did not. *It is no longer substance, but subject*" (LPR 3:267, emphasis added; cf. LPR 2:669). God is the sublime initiator of creation, existing not as substance but as subject. Jewish theology maintains that God exists for thought alone; nevertheless, God's purpose – which can only be God – cannot remain shut up, but must be realized in an external "soil," namely, human consciousness. Human beings are summoned to recognize and venerate God as God so that his purpose may become objective to him and return to him.<sup>7</sup> In receiving this summons and recognizing and venerating God, human beings manifest their freedom as transcendent to nature and grounded in the self-initiating sublime. Hegel writes:

When the human being thinks for himself and explores the depth of his spirit, he knows that his freedom is something far superior to all the creations and products of nature. Through his freedom the human being knows that he is more sublime. The human being knows his freedom, his spirit, justly as something divine in a far higher sense than anything natural . . . In everything human there is included the infinite stamp of spirit, [namely] freedom. (*LPhS* 58)

Although human beings can be sublimely self-determining, they are not absolutely self-creating; rather, they are both radically dependent in relation to God and independent in relation to the world and others. "Generally speaking, the highest independence of man is to know himself as totally determined by the absolute Idea; this is the consciousness and attitude that Spinoza calls *amor intellectualis Dei*" (*Enc.* I §158Z). This dependent independence is not freedom in separation or that of master vis à vis slave, but rather freedom *in relation*; it is neither individual autonomy nor heteronomy, but theonomy, a freedom that is founded in God and liberated from all finite, mundane dependence.<sup>8</sup> In recognizing and venerating God as God, humans are validated by God as ends in themselves. If this validation were not the case, God would deprive Godself of the free

<sup>7</sup> Recall Fichte's concept of the *Aufforderung*, which is correlative to recognition and freedom. See *FNR*, SW 3:34; cf. *GA* 4/2:177, 179. See also Williams 1992.

<sup>8</sup> The term "theonomy" was used in nineteenth-century mediating theology by H. L. Martensen; in the twentieth century it is associated with Paul Tillich, who identified it as a third, theological alternative to Kant's distinction between heteronomy and autonomy. See Tillich 1954, 44ff., 56ff. Hegel already possessed the root meaning of theonomy in his concept of recognition and love – namely, true freedom consists in union with other in and through difference – and in his concept of freedom as being at home with oneself in another.

recognition and veneration God expects, and their coerced recognition of God would be worthless.

Thus humanity . . . exists affirmatively vis à vis God; it is consciousness of the absolute essence; in other words, *the freedom of consciousness is hereby posited as such within God – in him humanity is at home with itself*. This moment of self-consciousness is an essential moment of freedom; it is a basic characteristic, even though it is not yet the whole content of the relationship. *By virtue of it human beings exist for themselves as ends in themselves; in God their consciousness is free, it is justified in God, it exists freely on its own account*, essentially for itself; and inasmuch as it directs itself toward God, human consciousness produces itself. (LPR 2:423; emphasis added)

Hegel's account of human freedom preserves the Greek claim that "the substantial element that is revered as God is at the same time the proper essentiality of the human being" (LPR 2:662). However, Hegel transforms it into an explicit *theological* doctrine, according to which God, the sublime initiator of creation, subsists not as substance but as subject, demanding recognition and veneration as God. This recognitive qualification of the doctrines of creation and divine purposiveness implies that divine-human relations are interhuman-communitarian ones. Hegel spells out the implications of community as follows:

The object of our concern, the community and communion of God and humanity with each other, is a community of spirit with spirit; and it involves the most important questions. It is a community, and *this very circumstance involves the difficulty of at once maintaining the difference and of defining it in such a way as to preserve the community*. That humanity knows God implies, in accord with the essence of community, a communal knowledge; that is to say, humanity knows God only insofar as God knows godself in humanity. This knowledge is God's self-consciousness, but it is at the same time a knowledge of God on the part of humanity; and this knowledge of God by humanity is the knowledge of humanity by God. (LProofs 126; emphasis added)<sup>9</sup>

The concept of community presupposes both identity and difference. Suppress identity, and community disintegrates. Suppressing the difference leaves only abstract identity and unity that likewise make community impossible. For Hegel recognition has a threefold structure and movement

<sup>9</sup> Such communal, interhuman knowing is not that of a one-sided, disinterested, objective spectator, but rather dialogical and interpersonal. That humanity knows God implies a reciprocal recognition and exchange, namely, that God knows Godself in humanity.

of mediation that lead to the formation and maintenance of the whole.<sup>10</sup> The account of divine purpose he ascribes to Jewish theology is *philosophically* trinitarian: God's purpose is realized in human recognition and veneration, and conversely human freedom is grounded in God.<sup>11</sup> However, this recognitive trinitarianism never found consistent expression in Jewish theology, and is distinct from Christian theological trinitarianism because it does not assert any immanent distinctions in God as the Christian view does.

Hegel agrees with Jewish theology that humanity must be grasped in the divine as at home with itself in its other. The presence of the finite and human in the infinite is supported not only by the Jewish doctrine of the sublime creator but also by the Christian doctrine of incarnation. Hegel writes:

Human beings can know themselves to be taken up into God only when God is not something alien to them . . . but rather when they are taken up into God in accordance with their essence and freedom. The implicitly subsisting unity of divine and human nature must be revealed to humanity in an objective way; this is what happened through the incarnation of God. (*LPR* 3:314)

Hegel interprets the Christian doctrine of incarnation, i.e., God in sensible presence, through the Greek principle, which he explicitly invokes:

God in sensible presence can take no other shape than that of human being. In the sensible and mundane order, only the human is spiritual; so if the spiritual is to have a sensible shape, it must be a human shape. (*LPR* 3:316)

Hegel brings together the Greek view with the Jewish principle:

The Jewish commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thyself any image of God," refers to the fact that God is essentially for thought; but *the other moment of divine life is its externalization in human shape*, so that this shape is involved in it as its *manifestation* (ibid.; emphasis added)

Hegel qualifies the Jewish concept of the sublime subject-creator with the concept of divine purposiveness, which makes the sensible human shape (of Jesus) the *manifestation* of sublime inwardness, and leads to the Christian concept of incarnation.

<sup>10</sup> See *PhG*, *PS* 177–78/*GW* 9:108–9, especially *PS* 184/*GW* 9:110, where the "syllogism" of mutual recognition is evident. See Williams 1992; 2012, chs. 1, 2.

<sup>11</sup> For philosophical trinitarianism based on the logical concept, see Rosen 2013; for both philosophical and theological trinitarianism, see Williams 2017; 2012.

One implication of divine incarnation is that “the abstract transcendence [*Jenseits*] of God is superseded [*aufgehoben*]” (LPR 3:316 n.). Hegel originally made this point in the *Phenomenology* when he claimed that the death of the mediator supersedes the abstract being and abstract transcendence of substance metaphysics.<sup>12</sup> He makes a similar criticism of the “falsity of the abstract infinite” in the *Logic*, namely, that the abstract absolute has no truth, no enduring being within it. Further he argues that the abstract infinite and the abstract finite, taken as separate from and independent of each other, are both untrue conceptions (WL, SLM 154). The true infinite is the infinite that includes the finite and hence is the unity of itself and its other. The *differentiation* of finite and infinite cannot be separated from their *unity* and vice-versa: “This *unity* of the finite and infinite and the *distinction* between them are just as inseparable as are finitude and infinity” (ibid.). Finite and infinite are united in and through difference, i.e., community. Hegel explains that within Christianity, incarnation means “God in sensible presence”; Hegel explicates this by means of the Greek principle transformed thus: “God in sensible presence can take no other shape than that of a human being” (LPR 3:316).

However, for Christianity incarnation is more than an imagination idealization of sensible human *shape*; it signifies an *actual* individual who can die. In contrast, the artistically constructed shape of the Greek gods is a *being-for-other* or projection. Moreover, where the sublime negates the appearance in which it appears and subsists apart from its appearance, Christianity holds “that *God* has died, that *God himself is dead* . . . [T]his is negation, which accordingly is a moment of the divine nature, of God himself” (LPR 3:219). This is the reason why for Hegel the death of Christ is the touchstone of faith (LPR 3:323 n.). Christianity holds that incarnation is the manifestation of God, and that this manifestation is inseparable from the death of God.

Despite the centrality of the death of God and the presence of finitude and negation in God, Hegel does not surrender, but qualifies his point about the beauty of the sensible presence of spirit: “The consummation of reality in immediate singular individuality is the most *beautiful* point of the Christian religion. For the first time the absolute transfiguration of finitude is intuitively exhibited” (LPR 3:113–15; emphasis added). Nevertheless, Hegel holds that while “the art of the Christian religion is beautiful, . . . [artistically constructed] ideality is not its ultimate principle” (LPR 2:660 n.). Rather than in beautiful ideality, God is manifest in the death of an

<sup>12</sup> PhG, PS 785/GW 9:418–19.



actual individual, who expresses the infinite love that is accompanied by infinite anguish (*LPR* 3:125). For the Christian religion, incarnation is more than an imaginative personification. Hegel explains:

the gods of the Ancients were ... regarded as personal ..., but the personhood of Zeus or of Apollo ... is not an actual personhood, but only an imaginary one. Or to put it another way, these gods are merely personifications; they do not know themselves as such; they are only known about instead. We also find this defect and this impotence of the ancient gods in the religious consciousness of the Ancients, in that they regarded the gods themselves, and not only human beings, as subject to destiny [fate] ... The Christian God, in contrast, is not merely known, but utterly self-knowing, and not a merely imaginary personhood, but rather the absolutely *actual* one. (*Enc.* I §147Z; emphasis added)

For Hegel incarnation manifests the substantial unity of divine and human nature: "The implicitly subsisting unity of divine and human nature must be revealed to humanity in an objective way; this is what happened through the incarnation of God" (*LPR* 3:314). Further, "[t]hrough faith we know that this individual has a divine nature, and in that way the abstract transcendence [*Jenseits*] of God is superseded" (*LPR* 3: 316 n.).

A further, systematic implication of Hegel's analysis is that the concepts of God and of incarnation are correlative, and that this correlation requires completion in the doctrine of trinity or *theological trinitarianism*. The trinity in Hegel's speculative holistic sense means that God endures and remains the same in absolute otherness, i.e., death. The death of God means that the human, the finite, the weak, the negative are themselves within Godself, and do not, as otherness, hinder unity with God. Otherness, the negative, death, etc. are known to be moments of the divine nature itself (*LPR* 3:326). The further crucial step in Hegel's trinitarianism is that God includes not only negation, but the negation of negation that reverses the negation of death.

Hegel formulates the systematic connection between God, negation, and death (theology of the cross) as follows. In the death of Jesus, God subjects Godself to death in order to put death itself to death; not only are finitude, death, and negation present in God, but also the negation of negation (*LPR* 3:220). The latter negation of negation constitutes the true infinity, i.e., divine triunity and totality. Hegel explores the issues of the relation of Christian dogma to his philosophical trinitarianism as follows:

God the actual being that is eternally in and for itself, eternally begets himself as his Son, distinguishes himself from himself – the absolute primal division. What God thus distinguishes from himself does not take on the

shape of other-being, but rather what is thus distinguished is immediately only that from which it has been distinguished. God is spirit . . . The relationship of father and son is drawn from organic life . . . This natural relationship is only figurative and never wholly corresponds to what should be expressed. We say that God eternally begets his Son, that God distinguishes himself from himself . . . and is utterly present to himself in an other whom he has posited (the form of love); but at the same time we must know very well that God is himself this entire activity. God is the beginning . . . but he is likewise simply the end, the totality, and it is as totality that God is Spirit. (*LPR* 3:284 n.)

For Hegel, Spirit is not one of the traditional Trinitarian persons, but rather the triune God as a whole or totality. Thus “merely as the Father, God is not yet the truth” (*ibid.*). However,

[t]he abstractness of the Father is given up in the Son – this . . . is death. But the negation of this negation is the unity of Father and Son – love, or the Spirit . . . The death of God is infinite negation, but God maintains himself in death, so that this process is rather a putting to death of death, a resurrection into life. (*LPR* 3:370)<sup>13</sup>

Hegel treats both the inner-trinitarian relations and the relations between God and humans as recognitive–communal relations.<sup>14</sup> They are not recognitive relations in the sense of objective spirit, i.e., that confer legal status or mediate property exchanges, but rather deeper recognitive relations of love.<sup>15</sup> Hegel writes:

as self-consciousness that is in and for itself, God himself is spirit; he produces himself also, he presents himself as being-for-other – this is what we call his “Son,” the configuration he assumes. In his own shape-taking, the other side of the process is at last present, when he distinguishes himself from the Son and loves the Son, positing himself as identical with him, but at the same time as distinct. This configuration . . . appears as totality . . . *as a configuration that is kept alive in love.* (*LPR* 2:377–78; emphasis added)

For these reasons Hegel claims that reconciliation

makes no sense if God is not known as the triune God, if it is not recognized that God is, but also is as the *other*, as self-distinguishing

<sup>13</sup> I have altered the order of the sentences. Hegel incorporates something like the sublime negation of the phenomenon but does not leave it there. God maintains Godself in death and in so doing negates the negation. Hegel combines the infinite negation in the true infinite with the theological claims of Lutheran theology concerning death and resurrection (as a negation of negation).

<sup>14</sup> *PhG*, *PS* 772/*GW* 9:411.

<sup>15</sup> According to Dieter Henrich, in Hegel’s intellectual development, love is the parent of mutual recognition. See Henrich 1981.

so that this other is God himself, . . . and that the sublation of this difference, this otherness, and the return of love, are the Spirit. (*LPR* 3:327; emphasis added)

He also expresses trinitarian theology in the language of the concept and syllogism:

God is the Trinity, i.e., he is the course of life that consists in being the universal that has being in and for itself, or in differentiating itself and then in setting itself over against itself, yet, in so doing, being identical with itself – in a word, it consists in being this syllogism. Now the faith that God is in Christ is the certainty that this course of the divine life *is* and has been envisaged in the course of this human life. (*LPR* 3:369)<sup>16</sup>

Eberhard Jüngel praises Hegel's accomplishment:

Hegel's philosophy of religion represents . . . a high-water mark of the first order in the history of theology, in that here the "theology of the cross" and the doctrine of the Trinity mutually imply and establish each other . . . We are dealing here with a grand theological accomplishment, namely a philosophically conceived theology of the crucified one as the doctrine of the Triune God. (Jüngel 1983, 94)

Jüngel is correct in his estimation of Hegel's accomplishment; however, Jüngel's interest is restricted to Hegel's reconstruction of Christian theology. Yet while important, this is only part of the story because for Hegel the consummate religion remains indebted to what it consummates and sublates. The historical, philosophical, and theological background of incarnation, death of God, and trinity become part of Hegel's concern to define and reformulate the human presence of spirit in a way that does not reduce it to a religion of humanity that identifies God and world, or to classical theism that separates God from world (spurious infinite). Hegel's true infinite incorporates the finite, and with that death and negation – and negation of negation. It is neither theism nor atheism but panentheism, "God existing as community" (*LPR* 3:331).

<sup>16</sup> This is Hegel's programmatic resolution of the antinomy of the Sublime and Beauty with which this essay began.

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